

Masonic Markers of Harris County

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Lodges

Holland Lodge No. 1 Ancient Free & Accepted Masons of Texas

Marker Location: 4911 Montrose Blvd., Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: First Masonic Lodge in Texas. Organized in March 1835 at Brazoria. Set to work Dec. 27, 1835, under dispensation of Grand Lodge of Louisiana, for whose 1835-37 Grand Master, John Henry Holland, this lodge was named. Labors were interrupted in Feb. 1836, in Texas War for Independence, when lodge and records were destroyed by Mexican army during march of Gen. Urrea to join forces with Dictator Santa Anna. The charter, however, was then in saddlebags of Dr. Anson Jones, Texas patriot and first worshipful master of Holland Lodge, who carried the sacred document into battle and victory at San Jacinto, April 21, 1836.

In Nov. 1837, Holland Lodge was reopened, in the Republic of Texas capitol (at site of present Rice Hotel), Houston. On Dec. 20, 1837, Holland Lodge No. 36 (the original designation under Grand Lodge of Louisiana) met with the only other Masonic bodies then existent in Texas -- Milam Lodge No. 40 of Nacogdoches and McFarland Lodge No. 41 of San Augustine -- and organized the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas. Dr. Anson Jones, of this lodge, was elected first grand master of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas, and Holland Lodge was assigned the No. 1 designation. (1970)

Temple Lodge No. 4 A. F. & A. M.

Marker Location: 4055 W Bellfort, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: This Masonic Lodge traces its history to the early days of the Republic of Texas, when the seat of government was located in the newly founded city of Houston. Formally chartered on May 10, 1838, Temple Lodge was the fourth Masonic organization established in Texas, and the first to be established in the new Republic. It was chartered by the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas, which had been formed from the three existing lodges, all of which had been chartered originally by the Louisiana Grand Lodge.

Playing leading roles in the organization's formation and development were many noted Texas patriots and statesmen. Early colonist George Fisher was named first Worshipful Master, with San Jacinto veteran Richard Bache as secretary and future Governor Francis R. Lubbock as first junior deacon. Temple Lodge held its regular meetings in the Senate Chamber of the Capitol in downtown Houston, where statesmen Anson Jones and Mirabeau Lamar were in frequent attendance. In July 1838, Temple Lodge conducted the first Masonic burial in the Republic of Texas for State Supreme Court Chief Justice James Collingsworth. Since its establishment Temple Lodge No. 4 has reflected the Masonic values and teachings of its founders. (1983)

Sampson Masonic Lodge # 231 A. F. & A. M.

Marker Location: 114 Ave D, Highlands, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Marker Text: Henry Sampson (1823-1885) moved to Houston in 1842 from South Carolina and affiliated with the Holland Masonic Lodge in Houston. Along with other leadership roles, Sampson served both as the Worshipful Master of the Holland Lodge and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Texas. In 1859, sixteen men submitted a petition to Grand Master Sampson to begin a new lodge in Lynchburg, and when the charter was granted on June 16, 1859, the members chose to name their lodge in his honor. The members met at a log cabin constructed specifically for lodge use on property that belonged to the lodge's first Worshipful Master, M. M. Michan. This first lodge was destroyed by fire, and when subsequent lodges in Lynchburg were destroyed by hurricanes in 1875, 1877 and 1900, the lodge was moved to Crosby.

In 1951 Sampson Lodge again relocated to 114 Avenue D in Highlands, and the lodge's activities began to reflect the importance of community outreach. Sampson Lodge recognizes outstanding community members with the Community Builder Award, and members participate in Highlands Clean Up Day, the Highlands Jamboree and parade, the lighting of the community Christmas tree, and the annual Rotarian fish fry. In 1999 the lodge began hosting an annual brisket fundraiser, and proceeds fund numerous local charities and organizations.

Sampson Masonic Lodge No. 231 A.F. & A.M. celebrated its sesquicentennial year in 2009, and continues to preserve, promote, and diffuse the principles of Free Masonry throughout its community. (2010)

Gray Lodge No. 329 A. F. & A. M.

Marker Location: 2370 Barker Oaks Dr, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 3

Marker Text: Founded in 1870, this is Houston's second oldest Masonic Lodge. On May 11, 1870, twenty-two Master Masons, in response to the growth in Houston's population, signed a petition requesting a charter for a new lodge from the Grand Lodge of Texas. Gray Lodge No. 329 was constituted in the Hall of Houston's first Masonic Lodge, Holland Lodge No. 1.

The lodge was named for William Fairfax Gray, who was in Texas as a land agent and attended the Convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos in 1836 when Texas declared independence from Mexico. Gray moved his family from Virginia to Houston in 1837. He was by profession an attorney, and served as clerk of the Republic of Texas House of Representatives and the Senate in 1837 and 1838.

Over the years the organization has been involved in a variety of community activities. Masons from Gray Lodge were among the first to respond to victims of the devastating Galveston storm in

September, 1900. A Masonic relief committee distributed groceries and medicine and a temporary relief committee was authorized to provide assistance. Gray Lodge No. 329 continues to serve the community and promote a spirit of brotherhood and goodwill. (1991)

Cedar Bayou Masonic Lodge No. 321 A. F. and A. M.

Marker Location: 2850 Ferry Rd, Cedar Bayou, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Marker Text: Chartered June 18, 1870, with 13 members. Opened its own hall July 7, 1876, donating quarters (1876-1911) to the first public school in east Harris County. On June 24, 1879, initiated an event that still continues -- the annual barbecue giving sense of community to area. In 100 years, Lodge has missed holding only one stated meeting. Through eras of great local expansion, this body has exerted stabilizing influence. Membership has grown steadily. Cedar Bayou sponsored organizing of lodges at Goose Creek (1922) and Anahuac (1948). (1970)

Hall of Cedar Bayou Masonic Lodge No. 321 A. F. and A. M.

Marker Location: 2850 Ferry Rd, Cedar Bayou, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

RTHL Marker Text: Built 1875-1876, largely by labor of members. Lumber, cut to order in Florida, arrived here by schooner in nick of time to escape havoc of 1875 hurricane. The 1883 Worshipful Master, J. H. Kipp, made and gave (1889) the carved and inlaid altar and some other appointments. Oldest Eastern Star chapter in Texas (Cedar Bayou Chapter No. 11, O. E. S.), organized in 1884, has always met in this hall.

Reagan Masonic Lodge # 1037 A. F. & A. M.

Marker Location: 1606 Heights Blvd, Houston, Harris Co Pct 1

Marker Text: Reagan Lodge, the first Masonic lodge instituted in the Houston suburbs, marked the beginning of the second wave of Houston Masonic lodges and accompanied a major surge in the growth of the city and the birth of its suburbs. The lodge was chartered in the municipality of Houston Heights on December 12, 1910; its first meeting was held on December 31, 1910. The lodge was named for Mason John Henninger Reagan (1818-1905), who served as a judge, Confederate Postmaster General, U.S. Congressman and Senator, framer of the 1876 Texas

constitution, and first chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission. Within its first twelve years, the lodge facilitated the formation of chapters of the Order of the Eastern Star, Order of DeMolay for boys and Order of Rainbow for girls. Three area schools have been named for lodge members.

The lodge's first regular meetings were held in a rented space in the 900 block of Yale St. An association was formed in 1912 to raise money for a new, permanent lodge building, which was constructed in 1930 at the northeast corner of Harvard St. and Eleventh Ave., but was taken over by a local bank in 1935 as a result of the great depression. The lodge met at a temporary site until the completion of the lodge building at the northeast corner of Heights Blvd. and Sixteenth Ave. in 1948. The building was designed by architect and Houston Heights resident L. R. Hayes, who was also Master of the Reagan Lodge 1937-1938. Reagan Masonic Lodge has a long history of charitable work and philanthropic endeavors and continues to be a civic leader in the Houston Heights community. (2010)

**Humble Lodge
No. 979 A. F. and A. M.**

Marker Location: 210 Main St, Humble, Harris Co Comm Pct 4

Marker Text: Near the turn of the century, the town of Humble was home to many Masons who were members of lodges located in nearby towns. With the help of local Justice of the Peace F. K. Wise, Humble area Masons organized their own lodge in 1908. Humble State Bank president and future Texas Governor Ross Sterling (1875-1949) provided meeting facilities in the bank building which formerly stood at this site. After the bank burned in 1912, the Masons bought the property and built a new lodge hall. The Masons have been active in civic programs over the years. (1992)

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Individuals

Robert Barr

1217 West Dallas at Valentine Street, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: San Jacinto veteran - Postmaster general of the Republic under Houston and Lamar - Born in Urbana, Ohio in 1802 - - - Died in Houston, Texas at 9 a.m. October 11, 1839, of yellow fever - Buried under the auspices of the Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges and the Milam Guards.

James Collingsworth

1217 West Dallas at Valentine Street, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: (Front) Born in Tennessee, 1806 - Drowned in Galveston, July 11, 1838, and his remains brought by boat up Buffalo Bayou to Houston - - His remains interred in this cemetery under the auspices of Temple Lodge No. 4 - - First Masonic funeral ever held in Texas.

(Reverse) Delegate to the Consultation held at San Felipe, 1835 - Signer, from Brazoria municipality, of the Texas Declaration of Independence - "Bore himself as a chief" at San Jacinto - Secretary of State, 1836 - Senator in the Congress of Texas, 1836 - First Chief Justice of the supreme Court of Texas - A county in Texas was named in his honor.

Joseph William Ellender

2850 Ferry Road, Cedar Bayou, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Grave Marker Text: (May 25, 1840 - February 24, 1917) British seaman Joseph William Ellender was shipwrecked off the coast of Iceland in 1866 and rescued by a schooner bound for Galveston. He settled in Cedar Bayou and married Nancy Lavenia Prather in 1868. They had ten children. A Master Mason, Ellender served as worshipful master of Cedar Bayou Lodge three times. He organized the Cedar Bayou chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star in 1884 and was Worthy Grand Patron of Texas in 1889.

Gustav August Forsgard

2525 Washington Avenue, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Marker Text: Gustav (Gustaf, Gustave) August Samuelson (1832-1919) was one of 13 children born to Johannes Samuelson and Anna Petersdotter of Forserum, Sweden. At the age of 16, he emigrated from Sweden, arriving in Houston with a group of other Scandinavians on November 22, 1848. Two prominent Swedish Texans, Swante Mangus Swenson and Sir Swante Palm, met the group, which wintered at the Swenson farm in Fort Bend County. There, the men in the group worked the fields tending cotton and corn. Samuelson changed his last name to Forsgard for his native Forserum and the Swedish word Gard, meaning "home." Four of his brothers, Samuel Johan, Carl Oscar, Johannes Wilhelm and Claes Henning, followed Forsgard to the U.S. and adopted the same new name; all but Claes settled in Texas.

After a year of farm work, Forsgard returned to Houston and worked as a mercantile clerk for Shepherd and Burke. He also became part of Swenson's and Palm's informal Swedish immigration agency. Forsgard acted as a liaison between new immigrants and Swedes already living in Texas.

During the next several years, Forsgard attended school and pursued various business interests. During the Civil War, Forsgard served with Texas forces. His responsibilities included building fortifications near Galveston to defend against a possible Federal invasion. Forsgard wed Jennie Mary Lusk in 1866, and the couple had two children who survived to adulthood. Over the years, Forsgard was civically active and was a trustee of First Presbyterian Church, director of First National Bank and Master of Holland Masonic Lodge No. 1 of Houston. (2005)

William Gammell

2911 Washington Avenue, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Marker Text: (October 18, 1812 - April 10, 1869) William Gammell was born in Ayshire, Scotland. He and his parents immigrated to the United States, settling in Lowell, Massachusetts. Gammell arrived in Texas during the spring of 1836, where he enlisted in the Texian Army on April 5. He served in the army under Captain Alfred Henderson Wyly and fought at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. Gammell also served as a gunsmith for the new Republic of Texas, rebuilding firearms for the army in the summer of 1836. In the summer of 1837 he served under Captain John Bowyer in the "mounted gun men," a volunteer group established by the Republic of Texas for the protection of the northern frontier from Indians.

Gammell married Jane McDaniel, a native of New York, on July 19, 1839 in Houston. The couple had no children. In 1842 Gammell was again called to defend his new homeland and enlisted in Captain James Gillespie's company in the spring of that year to defend San Antonio against an invasion by the Mexican Army. Gammell again took up arms in September of 1842 and fought under Captain Jesse Billingsley against the Mexican Army at the Battle of Salado Creek.

Gammell traveled to California during the gold rush, but returned to Texas to settle on 390 acres just outside the city limits, now situated under highway 59 at Lyons Avenue in Houston's Fifth Ward. Gammell opened a gunsmith shop on Congress Avenue in Houston ca. 1851 and operated the business until his retirement in 1866. Gammell died unexpectedly from pneumonia in 1869 and was buried in Houston's Masonic Cemetery. In 1900 he was reinterred in the Deutsche Gesellschaft (German Society) Cemetery, which is now Washington Cemetery. (2009)

William Gammell

1217 West Dallas at Valentine Street, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: Born in Scotland - - Fought at San Jacinto in Captain A. H. Wyly's company - - - Died in Houston, April 10, 1869 and was buried here His widow Jane McDaniel Gammell died November 11, 1908 and was buried in the Glenwood Cemetery.

(Supplemental plaque THC 2006): Later research shows William Gammell (Oct. 18, 1812 - Apr. 10, 1869) was buried in the Masonic Cemetery (now Sam Houston Park) on Apr. 11, 1869 and reinterred in the German Society Cemetery (now Washington Cemetery) on Jan. 22, 1900. His wife, Jane McDaniel Gammell (Mar. 28, 1825-Nov. 12, 1908), was interred in the German Society Cemetery on Nov. 13, 1908. (2006)

[Henry F. Gillette] Bell Prairie

2000-1/2 Tri-Cities, Beach Road, Baytown, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Marker Text: Once located southwest of this site was the home of Henry Falvel Gillette (1816-1896). A native of Connecticut, Gillette came to Texas in 1840 at the urging of his cousin, Ashbel Smith. He became a noted educator in Harris, Washington, and Polk counties. He married Lucinda Maxey (1826-1901) of Washington County in 1842. The Gillette family lived on the plantation of Lucinda's father, William Maxey, in present San Jacinto County from about 1848 until 1859, when Henry bought property on Galveston Bay. He named his plantation home Bell Prairie. The plantation included a two-story brick home, matching carriage house, and slave quarters. a wharf on the property was used for the importation of cattle from England.

In addition to operating his plantation, Gillette was superintendent of the Bayland Orphan's Home on nearby Goose Creek and was a founding member and Worthy Master of the Cedar Bayou Masonic Lodge. Following Henry Gillette's death, Bell Prairie remained in the family until the mid-20th century. The plantation home was severely damaged in the 1900 hurricane and burned to the ground after being struck by lightning in the 1915 storm. (1989)

Anson Jones

2525 Washington Avenue, Houston, Harris Co Pct 2

Marker Text: (January 20, 1798 - January 9, 1858) Anson Jones was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. He earned his M.D. degree in Philadelphia in 1827; by October 1833, Jones had moved to Texas, establishing a successful medical practice in Brazoria. In 1835, he helped organize Holland Lodge No. 36, the first Masonic Lodge in Texas. In 1836, Jones joined in Texas' War for Independence and served as Judge Advocate and surgeon of the Second Regiment. He fought as a private in the Battle of San Jacinto.

After the war, Jones returned to his medical practice and in 1837 was elected to the House of Representatives. That year, he was also elected as the first Grand Master of Masons in Texas and was among the noted charter members who organized the Philosophical Society of Texas. In 1838, Sam Houston appointed Jones as Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Texas. In this position, he began to stimulate American support for annexation by strengthening Texas' ties with Great Britain and France, playing at U.S. insecurities.

Jones married Mary Smith McCrory in 1840; she was later elected the first president of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. In 1841, President Houston appointed Jones as Secretary of State, where he further encouraged annexation. In 1844, Jones was elected president of the Republic of Texas; he became the country's last president when the U.S. annexed Texas on December 29, 1845. At a formal ceremony in Austin on February 19, 1846, Jones lowered the Lone Star flag and declared, "the Republic of Texas is no more." He retired to Barrington, his plantation near what is now Washington-on-the-Brazos, where he spent much of his time writing. Today, Anson Jones is remembered for his multitude of accomplishments, including those that earned him the nickname, "the Architect of Annexation." (2009)

Major Isaac N. Moreland

1217 West Dallas at Valentine Street, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: Born in Georgia - Came to Texas in 1834 - Storming of Bexar, 1835 - Commanded the artillery at San Jacinto - Made major, July 20, 1836 - Law partner of David G. Burnet, 1837 - Died June 7, 1840 while Chief Justice of Harris County - - Buried under the auspices of the Masons and the Independent Military Companies of Houston

Reverend Ned P. Pullum

1319 Andrews St, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: The Rev. Ned P. Pullum was an influential African American pastor in 19th and 20th century Houston. Born c. 1861 in Pickensville, Alabama, he was ordained a Baptist minister by 1889 and in 1895 accepted the pastorate of Antioch Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas. In 1896, he moved to the Freedmen's Town community, founded after emancipation in Houston's fourth ward. Later, he was chosen as pastor of Bethel Baptist Church after the death of the Rev. John "Jack" Yates. In 1898, the Rev. Pullum purchased land at this site and soon began building his family residence here. In 1903, the Rev. Pullum left the Bethel congregation to organize Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. He conveyed land and raised funds to build the church building. He pastored there 24 years until his health began to fail. The Rev. Pullum died on June 18, 1927 and was survived by his wife, Emma (Eddings) and their two children. He is buried in Houston's College Park Cemetery.

In addition to spiritual leadership, the Rev. Ned P. Pullum provided vital direction in local civic affairs. As a member of Magnolia Masonic Lodge No. 4, he helped establish Houston's Carnegie Colored Library, as the institution was known during the era of segregation, and contributed to Union Hospital, an early medical facility founded and operated by African American doctors. A successful entrepreneur, he owned real estate, founded Pullum Standard Brick Work in 1904 and, shortly after, People's Pride Shoe Repair and two drugstores. (2006)

John R. Reid

1217 West Dallas at Valentine Street, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, 1839 - - A member of the Congress of the Republic, 1840-1841 - Died in Houston, December 25, 1841, and was buried under the auspices of Holland (Masonic) Lodge No. 1

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Cemetery Notes

1840 Houston City Cemetery

1101 Girard at Elder, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Marker Text: On April 8, 1840, the City of Houston purchased five acres in the First Ward from brothers Henry R. and Samuel L. Allen for \$750, in order to establish Houston's first city owned cemetery. A city ordinance passed later that year divided the cemetery into four sections: (1) a "potters field" for criminals, suicides, and persons killed in duels, (2) the "negroes burying ground," (3) the "commons" for "all others not otherwise provided for," and (4) family plots "for sale to the highest bidder." Later sections were created for members of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) and the Masons.

As the only city cemetery in use during a forty-year period, it became the final resting place of many citizens of the Republic of Texas and veterans of the Civil War. Also buried in the cemetery were many victims of Houston's recurring yellow fever epidemics, the last of which occurred in 1867.

The city discontinued use of the 1840 cemetery when a new cemetery opened on Allen Parkway ca. 1879, and thereafter only burials in existing family plots were allowed. In 1893, the City Council announced plans to move all remains to a new location and build a schoolhouse on the site. However, public outcry prompted an injunction prohibiting the action. By 1923, this cemetery was neglected and overgrown and very few grave markers were still visible. Jefferson Davis Hospital was built on the site in 1924 and the Houston Fire Department facility was added in 1968. While thousands remain buried here, the only above-ground evidence of the cemetery today is the concrete curbing surrounding the Super family plot in front of the hospital and a small Confederate section inside the Fire Department facility. (2008)

Evergreen Cemetery

670 Altic St off of 5500 Harrisburg Blvd., Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Marker Text: The Evergreen Cemetery Association organized in 1894 and purchased 25 acres at this site to establish a cemetery. The first recorded burial was that of the infant Nellie Storkes on October 4, 1894. Charles Hooper replaced first sexton Joseph Grededig in 1898 and served until 1924. He was succeeded by his son, James, during whose tenure (1924-1936) of the original 25 acres were sold. Hooper family members cared for all or part of the cemetery until 1984.

Three distinctive ethnic burial arrangements exist here. Southern folk burial sites are often subdivided by families and enclosed by a fence with an arched gate. German families are buried together and their grave stones decorated by fine craftsmanship. Rows of evergreens and crepe myrtles often separate the German sections. Hispanic grave sites tend to be individually situated and decorated with floral arrangements. Among those buried in the cemetery are veterans of conflicts ranging from the Civil War to World War II, city and county officials, and local labor group and fraternal organizational members including the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and Woodmen of the World. The cemetery is maintained by an association comprised of descendants of people buried here. (1994)

Sam Houston Park

1100 Bagby, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: Sam Houston Park began with Nathaniel Kelly Kellum's purchase of 13 acres on the south bank of Buffalo Bayou in 1844 and 1845. Here Kellum built a brick factory, a tannery and his residence. The property was later sold to Zerviah Noble, who held it until it was purchased by the City of Houston in 1899 to become the first public park so designated by the City of Houston. The two-story brick house that had been built by Kellum in 1847 became the headquarters building for the Parks Department. The park was known as City Park until its name was officially changed to Sam Houston Park in 1903.

By 1961, the park had expanded to nearly 21 acres, including property that had formerly been the Episcopal and Masonic Cemeteries, yet the popularity of the park as a leisure site had begun to wane. In 1959 almost two acres of land at the far western edge of the park had been taken for support piers and access ramps for the interstate 45 elevated roadway, possibly contributing to the park's decline in attractiveness to the public.

The Kellum-Noble House stood vacant on the park grounds for several years, and by 1954 the City of Houston announced plans to raze the building. A group of preservation minded citizens banded together to save the important landmark. The resulting Harris County Heritage and Conservation Society (now known as "The Heritage Society") not only achieved the goal of stabilizing the building and opening it as a museum, but also revitalized the park by creating a home for many historic and replica structures. Other public sculptures and monuments have also found their home in the park. Sam Houston Park has once again become a popular cultural, educational and leisure site for Houston's downtown residents. (2009)

Prairie Grove Cemetery

13685 Renn Rd, Houston, Harris Co Pct 3

Marker Text: This site recalls a historic African American church, school and cemetery in Alief. Only a few African Americans lived in the area in the nineteenth century, working as farm laborers or tenant farmers. More families came in the early twentieth century, including the David and

Parthenia Outley family from Fort Bend County by 1910. S. B. (Shorter)Burluson, Eddie and Will Garmond, and others arrived soon after. Oral tradition tells that Prairie Grove Missionary Baptist Church first met in the Burluson home; Mamie Burluson was instrumental in naming the church. In October 1920, L.P. Scarborough sold this land to church trustees S. B. Burluson and Will and Eddie Garmond, in 1921-22, the congregation built a white frame sanctuary that also served as a schoolhouse from 1927 to 1937. The congregation dwindled in the 1940s, and the building was later razed.

Early black families used other area cemeteries before establishing this burial ground adjacent to the church. About fifty known graves have been surveyed on the 1.35 acre property, along with several unmarked graves. The earliest known burials are those of Melissa Outley (1940), Leo Bryant, Jr. (1941), Lillian Garmond Jackson (1942) and Lucy Truitt (1943). Unmarked graves, however, may predate these. Pioneer families, Freemasons and military veterans from World War II and the Vietnam Conflict are buried here. Descendants of church founders formed Prairie Grove Cemetery Association in 1967 to maintain and preserve the burial ground. The once rural cemetery is still in use by descendants of early families and others. (2006)

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Spheres of Influence

Acres Homes Community

West Montgomery Rd & W. Little York, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

Marker Text: In 1910, land developer Alfred A. Wright platted the first of several subdivisions that eventually became the African American community of Acres Homes. Wright sold parcels of varying sizes to residents who were attracted to the rural area by the inexpensive land, low taxes, and the absence of building restrictions, as well as the slow paced life and wide-open spaces of rural living. Despite the lack of common municipal services such as electricity, street lights, garbage disposal, sewer and water, Acres Homes flourished as a self-contained community. In 1957, Negro Life magazine described acres homes as the "largest all-negro community in the United States." By 1974, the community extended roughly from West Tidwell to Gulf Bank and from North Shepherd to White Oak Bayou and Duboise. The residents included farmers, laborers, factory workers, "waterfront" workers and domestics who commuted to work in other parts of town.

The first church, Galilee Missionary Baptist, was organized in 1913, and the first school, White Oak Colored, opened in 1915. From the 1930s through the 1950s, a large migration of settlers moved into the area, organizing civic clubs and building homes, churches, Masonic halls and businesses. The first dry goods store, drug store and post office opened in 1945. The first black-owned bus company in the south, the Acres Homes Transit Company, operated from 1959 until 1968.

Integration and the gradual annexation of Acres Homes by the City of Houston from 1967 to 1974 brought population diversity and transformation to Acres Homes. However, Acres Homes continues to retain its strong community identity and civic pride. (2008)

Blue Triangle Branch, Y. W. C. A. Building

3005 McGowen at Sauer, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 1

RTHL Marker Text: In the early 20th century, Houston's African American community wanted to provide recreational facilities for its youth and for African American troops stationed at Camp Logan. Various groups formed, including two interested in the welfare of young girls. The Camp

Logan Activities Committee offered civics and morality instruction, and a committee created by Mary L. Jones aimed to form an organization dedicated to girls' moral and spiritual growth.

During World War I, a national representative from the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) worked with Jones to open a recreation center in 1917 in the Masonic building at 806 Clay. Following the war, the center applied to Houston's YWCA for branch status, which was given in 1920. The Blue Triangle Branch, YWCA, offered athletic, musical and educational programs for girls. In 1921, it opened a boarding house, which grew throughout the decade. During the Great Depression, the center closed the residence, but services expanded, helping hundreds of women and girls find work.

In the 1940s, the Blue Triangle YWCA began plans to build a new center. A group of women donated this site, and construction began in 1950 on the building designed by noted Houston architects Hiram A. Salisbury and Birdsall P. Briscoe. The architects chose a Transitional style, showing late Art Moderne as well as more contemporary elements. The building exhibits a semi-circular entry portico, casement windows and raised brick banding, with a fret pattern used frequently by Briscoe.

The Blue Triangle YWCA was an important part of the lives of the community's women and girls. Several women, including Lilla B. Love and Elizabeth E. Stevens, willed property to the organization in continued support of its mission. The Blue Triangle ended its YWCA affiliation in 1998. Restored and reopened by a community group, the new center offers youth and adult programs, and provides space for other groups. (2002)

Supplemental Plaque: Blue Triangle Community Center purchased and restored Blue Triangle Multi-Cultural Association, Inc. Established January 2000, the building features a mural by celebrated artist John T. Biggers (1924-2001).

Woodland Heights Community

3300 Beauchamp & 300 Highland, Houston, Harris Co Comm Pct 2

Marker Text: In the early 20th Century, William A. Wilson, with the financial backing of James A. Baker, Jr., Joseph B. Bowles, Rufus Cage and J. M. Cotton, established the Woodland Heights Community north of and topographically higher than downtown Houston. Among the partners, William Wilson chose to live on Bayland Street in the Woodland Heights neighborhood. The developers' firm, the William Wilson Realty Company, platted the addition as a streetcar suburb, where residents would commute to and from work and shopping by use of public transportation. Built in the southwestern area of Germantown, the community included water piped into every house, concrete sidewalks, graded streets, and trees and shrubs for beautification purposes.

The developers began selling land and constructing houses in 1907. Residents soon organized community institutions, including the Beauchamp Springs Presbyterian, Woodland Baptist and Zion Lutheran Churches, and the Woodland Masonic Lodge #1157, A. F. & A. M. The

Woodland Heights Garden Club later developed, which was followed by the Woodland Heights Civic Association. The developers also provided for education by deeding land to the Travis Elementary School (previously Beauchamp Springs Public School). Businesses, including several grocery stores, would also open in the primarily residential neighborhood.

Many of the neighborhood's historic structures, built between 1907 and 1925, and reflecting arts and crafts and bungalow styles, remain. The community was later incorporated into Houston, and today, Woodland Heights continues to be a thriving neighborhood. (2008)

