

## Harris County Community Historical Markers:

A chronology ordered by the earliest date mentioned in the marker

Compiled by Will Howard, 2016

**1841**                    **Spring Creek County**

### **15012 Brown Road, Tomball**

In early Texas, most citizen interactions with government took place at the county seat, so smaller counties were more convenient for the residents. Prior to 1841, each county had at least one congressman, but since the Republic of Texas constitution limited Congress to 40 members, Spring Creek and 15 other new counties became "judicial" counties providing all court and government services. Congressional districts, however, remained unchanged, so some congressmen now represented multiple counties. On January 21, 1841, at the request of 130 male residents of Harris and Montgomery counties, Congress created Spring Creek County, extending from the head of Spring Creek near Waller to its mouth near Humble, and from Lake Creek in the north to just south of Cypress Top. The county seat was to be a new town named Greenville, 1/4 mile south of Spring Creek, near today's Rose Hill. George W. Cropper, Isaac Decker, William Pierpont, Abram Roberts and Archibald Smith were named county commissioners, and James Cooper was appointed chief justice (county judge). On May 8, 1841, the following were elected: district clerk William B. Reeves, county clerk Thomas M. Hogan, sheriff Alexander F. Barron, coroner Jason Whitney, surveyor Eugene Pillot, and justices of the peace Nathaniel H. Carrol, Samuel Davis, James Dickson, Henry T. Mostyn, Claude N. Pillot, and John Simmons. Since each county did not have its own congressman, the Republic of Texas Supreme Court declared the judicial counties unconstitutional on February 4, 1842, and their lands reverted to their parent counties. Many former judicial counties were recreated after statehood; Spring Creek County is the only one whose territory remains almost entirely within its parent counties.

Harris County contains over 400 historical markers. Below are about three dozen "named" community markers signifying a home place for some group of people. Some are now neighborhoods in larger cities. Some communities have no marker even though more specific elements in their history are marked (e.g., none for Barker, Baytown, Lynchburg, etc., but there are marked subordinate elements). It is surprising that some are not marked. Some have just dissolved or drifted from memory. Larger rural enterprises such as plantations, farms, and ranches can be seen as communities; there are many, but they are not included here. Military installation also are excluded, e.g., Camp Logan and Ellington A.F.B. of World War I.

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## **Prehistoric    Prehistoric Indian Campsite**

605 Pine Gully Road - Seabrook

Marker Text: In this vicinity are the remains of a prehistoric Indian refuse pile, comprised mainly of clam shells. Archeologists call such sites "shell middens." They are the result of centuries of shellfish harvesting by early Indian groups. Shells found at this site have been identified as belonging to the Rangia Cuneata (common Rangia) clam, a species once found in abundant numbers in Galveston Bay.

As the shell midden grew in size over the years, it became the foundation for a large Indian campsite. Stone tools and pottery uncovered here are evidence of the later occupation. Although the tribal origins of the Indians cannot be determined, it is known that both Orcoquisac and Karankawa once lived in the area in historic times.

Shell middens similar to this one were once more common along the streams feeding into the bay. Storms, subsidence, and natural erosion, however, have destroyed many, as have mining operations that used the shells for road construction projects. As a result, this is one of the best remaining examples of a prehistoric midden and campsite in Harris County. Because of its significance, the site has been afforded special protection as a State Archeological Landmark

## **Prehistoric     Harris County Boy's School, Archeological Site**

5003 East NASA Parkway - Seabrook

Marker Text: In this vicinity lies a prehistoric Indian campsite and burial ground that takes its name from the property on which it resided at the time of its discovery. It is classified as a shell midden site because of the presence of a midden, or refuse pile, of oyster and Rangia clam shell. The midden collected as the result of early inhabitants consuming shellfish and leaving the empty shell where they are, which was usually at or near their campsite.

Archeological excavations revealed a variety of artifacts, including a Plainview dart point, which is associated with very early Indians. Its discovery supported radiocarbon testing that had dated part of the midden to 1476 B.C.

Evidence of 32 burials was uncovered in another section of the site. Ceramics interred with the burials dated the cemetery from the first millennium A.D.

Scientific investigation of the Harris County Boys' School Archeological Site led to other studies of the cultural aspects of the prehistoric inhabitants of the area. The site remains as a significant example of the shell midden, once relatively common along the Texas Coast, but now rarely found due to beach erosion and subsidence.

## **1600s             Harris County**

1115 Congress - Houston

Marker Text: Inhabited during the 17th century by Karankawa and Orcoquiza Indians, and considered in 1756 by Spain for site of Presidio de San Agustin de Ahumada, this region was settled permanently in 1822 by the colonists of Stephen F. Austin. In 1824 John R. Harris (1790-1829) received title to 4,428 acres of land in Buffalo Bayou-Braes Bayou Junction area, and started a village named for his family and for Harrisburg, Pa., founded by his grandfather. Colonial settlements in the vicinity were Cedar Bayou, Lynchburg, Midway, Morgan's Point, New Kentucky, and Stafford's Point.

First step toward local government was taken when Stephen F. Austin and the Baron de Bastrop met (1824) with colonists at the house of William Scott, Midway, to explain colonization laws. Harrisburg, a town by 1826, was one of the original and most influential colonial municipalities, with a major role in Texas War for Independence, which won freedom in 1836.

The county of Harrisburg (later Harris) was created Dec. 30, 1836. The capital of the Texas Republic was within its boundaries for several years. In the Civil War, it was a command and ordnance center (1863-65), of Trans-Mississippi Department, Confederate Army. It has since grown into a center for world commerce.

## **1820s             Katy, The City**

5200 Second Street at Avenue B - Katy

Marker Text: Karankawa Indians hunted buffalo on this site as late as the 1820s. Present Fifth Street follows the course of the San Felipe Road, which was opened to Austin's colony in that decade. In 1836 Santa Anna used that road in his march toward San Jacinto.

This site was in the 1839 land grant of Republic of Texas citizen James J. Crawford. In 1863 at their camp on San Felipe Road, 35 Confederate soldiers died and were buried in the locality. Cane Island, the original settlement, was known as a stagecoach stop.

Developers platted Katy townsite after Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad ("The Katy Line") reached this point in 1895. The post office opened Jan. 23, 1896, in the postmaster's mercantile store. In 1897, William Eule grew a rice crop, initiating the locality's major industry. Eule's son Fred dug an irrigation well for the rice fields in 1899. The 1900 hurricane razed or damaged all improvements except two houses in Katy, but the town was soon rebuilt. Beginning in 1927, nearby petroleum developments enhanced the local economy. Incorporated in 1945, the town had 849 people in 1950 and 3800 by 1970. It is a tri-county municipality, lying in Fort Bend, Harris, and Waller counties. (1978)

## **1826 Harrisburg, Old**

800 block of Lawndale at Frio - Houston

Marker Text: Early Texas port and trading post. Site of state's first steam saw, grist mills and railroad terminal. Town founded, 1826, by John R. Harris, who was first settler in 1823. Became shipping center for early colonies, established when Texas was part of Mexico, with boats carrying cargo to and from Texas ports and points in the United States and Mexico.

Became the seat of government of the Republic of Texas, March 22 - April 13, 1836, when David G. Burnet, President of the ad interim government and several of his cabinet resided near here in the home of Mrs. Jane Harris (site marked), widow of town founder. Here President Burnet adopted the flag for the Texas Navy. In 1835, local resident, Mrs. Sarah Dodson, had made here the first tri-color lone star flag.

General Santa Anna attacked the town with 750 Mexican soldiers on April 16 attempting to capture Burnet and his cabinet. The whole town was burned.

After Texas gained its independence at nearby San Jacinto, the town was rebuilt and again thrived.

The Buffalo, Bayou, Brazos and Colorado, first railroad in Texas began here in 1852 and by the Civil War made the town a Confederate rail center.

Became a part of Houston, by annexation, in 1926.

## **1830s Pasadena, City of**

Eagle Street & Main St. - Pasadena

Marker Text: This area has progressed from Indian territory to pioneer ranch land to space-age Pasadena. Known at one time for its strawberry patches, it is now acclaimed for its oil and chemical industries.

The Vince brothers, members of Stephen F. Austin's original 300 settlers, developed area as ranch land.

The armies of both Sam Houston and Santa Anna traveled through what is now Pasadena in 1836, to San Jacinto to decide the future of Texas. "Deaf" Smith destroyed a bridge on the Vince ranch to block possible escape by the Mexican army. After the brief battle, Santa Anna eluded the victorious Texas army on a horse stolen from Allen Vince. He was captured approximately one mile from this marker. Site of the bridge and capture may be seen by following signs to the north.

In 1850, surveyors of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad called the area "Land of Flowers."

Col. J. H. Burnet, a land developer from Galveston, founded Pasadena in 1895. He said, "Pasadena will be the hub of a vast rich agricultural area." The area fully justified his vision, for by 1908, "delicious strawberries, figs, oranges and vegetables" were the boast of Pasadena.

### **1830s Frost Town Community**

512 McKee Street - Houston

Marker Text: The Frost Town Community developed on the property of Jonathan Benson Frost, a veteran of the Texas war for independence. After the battle of San Jacinto in 1836, Frost returned to his Tennessee home and brought his family to Texas, establishing a blacksmith shop and homestead about one mile east of the new city of Houston. He died from cholera in 1837, and in 1838, his brothers, Samuel Miles Frost and James Coleman Frost, subdivided his property, creating one of Houston's earliest additions, which remained in residential use until the early 1990s. German immigrants soon settled here, and by the 1850s, Frost Town was a thriving community which reflected its residents' cultural heritage. Several prominent Houston-area German families lived in the settlement. Others in the area included Irish immigrants and employees of the Galveston, Houston & Henderson Railroad, which reached the area in 1853.

By the 1870s, Frost Town was a community in transition. Area railroads had contributed to industrial development between Houston and Frost Town, and freedmen moved into the community, which was now considered part of Houston's Second Ward. By the early 20th century, unskilled workers began to move into Frost Town, which was now connected to industries on the north side of Buffalo Bayou by a steel truss swing bridge built in 1904. Mexican residents began to move into Frost Town, while Anglo-European residents left, further shifting the community's demographics.

Between 1930 and 1950, Frost Town became increasingly isolated because of industrial development. Residents began relocating following World War II, when the Elysian Viaduct and U. S. Highway 59 were constructed through the area, eliminating Frost Town's residential buildings. Today, James Bute Park marks the former community, which existed for more than 100 years.

### **1830 ca. New Kentucky, Site of**

Marker Text: Established before 1831. A thriving town until its trade was captured by the present city of Houston, established 30 miles away in 1836. Abandoned about 1840.

### **1831 Cypress**

## 26026 Hempstead Highway - Cypress

Marker Text: Attakapas and Akokisa Indians began to disappear from Harris County in the mid-1800s with the arrival of Anglo settlers. The first documented settlers in the Cypress area were the Burnett and Simmons families, beginning by 1831. Matthew Burnett established a tavern and inn near the Cypress Creek crossing on the road to Washington-on-the-Brazos, and was designated as the first Postmaster at Big Cypress by 1840. In the late 1840s, German immigrants and settlers seeking land ownership and religious freedom came to the Cypress area, which soon grew into a rural community of farmers, dairymen, and ranchers. Small schools served the educational needs of the children. More a region than a single community, Cypress encompasses more than a hundred square miles within the Cypress Creek and Little Cypress Creek watersheds, including the early settlements of Big Cypress, Hamblin, Eden, Cypress Grove, Cypress Top, Cypress City, and the town of Cypress.

Railroads through this area were chartered in 1839 and 1848 to follow a route that was graded for a plank road. The Cypress Top Post Office was established in 1851 along this route. In July 1856, tracks for the Galveston and Red River Railway (soon renamed the Houston and Texas Central railway) reached Cypress Top depot, 26 miles northwest of Houston. The railroad attracted businesses and created a district of stores, hotels, and saloons. In the early 1900s the discovery of a hot artesian well developed into the Houston Hot Well Sanitarium and Hotel. Dance halls, such as Tin Hall and Juergen's Hall, were popular. Cypress Top Historic Park preserves a remnant of the railroad community.

### **1835                      New Washington**

Marker Text: Located at the junction of Buffalo Bayou and San Jacinto Bay, the townsite of New Washington was settled by Col. James Morgan (1786-1866), who bought 1600 acres of land in the area in 1835. A native of Philadelphia, Morgan had come to Texas in 1830 and served at various times and places as merchant, civic leader, and land agent. While away from his home, serving as a colonel during the Texas Revolution, Mexican troops burned the town of New Washington.

After the war, Morgan and others rebuilt New Washington, and the townsite began to flourish. Morgan realized, however, that it could never compete with the growth of nearby Houston, and during the 1850s he began to promote plans for a channel along Buffalo Bayou that would increase the region's trade potential. That dream was completed in 1876 with the dredging of the Houston Ship Channel by steamship tycoon Charles Morgan.

As Houston continued to grow, New Washington was recognized only as a major bend for the ship traffic along the bayou. Now known as Morgan's Point, the townsite was incorporated in 1949 and stands as a reminder of the early commercial history of Harris County.

### **1836                      Houston City, Republic of Texas**

Marker Text: By vote of Congress, Nov. 30, 1836, chosen temporary capital for new Republic of Texas. At the time a small townsite at the head of Buffalo Bayou navigation. Into a "Houston City" of mud, tents, cabins on April 1, 1837, came President Sam Houston and his government. Finding its quarters unfinished, Congress postponed its opening session until May 1. The capitol building was a 2-story plantation style house, with columned porches. It was scene of many important Indian treaties, diplomatic negotiations, legislative functions. As no church yet graced the city, it also was used for religious services.

That muddy April saw the city hold its first big social event-- the anniversary celebration of the San Jacinto victory, with parade, reception and ball.

On Dec. 5, 1837, some war heroes and other leaders founded in the capital the Texas Philosophical Society, the Republic's first learned organization.

In a powdered wig, and dressed to resemble George Washington, President Houston made a 3-hour farewell address, after which Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar was inaugurated his successor on Dec. 10, 1838.

In 1839, removed to Austin, the capital returned here, but only briefly, 1842, in Mexican invasion.

## **1845 Klein Community**

16715 Stuebner-Airline at Loretta - Klein

Marker Text: A farming community developed in this area after a group of German immigrants settled on the banks of Cypress Creek in 1845. The settlement was later named for Adam Klein, who left Germany in 1849 and joined the California gold rush before moving here with his wife Friederika (Klenk) in 1854.

Farmers in this vicinity raised cotton, potatoes, and corn, and marketed their produce in Houston, a two-day trip by wagon. Center of community life was Trinity Lutheran Church, organized in 1874 by the Bernshausen, Benfer, Brill, Kaiser, Klein, Lemm, Theiss, and Wunderlich families. The Klenk and Strack families joined soon after the charter was signed.

The settlement was called Big Cypress until Klein Post Office was established Sept. 8, 1884. William N. Blackshear, the first postmaster, operated the postal facility in his general store. It was replaced by rural free delivery in 1906.

Although never platted or incorporated, the Klein community formed the nucleus of a school district. In 1928 five districts were consolidated to create Rural High School District Number One. Many early schools had only one room and one teacher. In 1938 the district became Klein Independent School District.

## **1861 Dairy (Alief)**

12101 7th Street - Houston

Marker Text: **Reynolds** Reynolds claimed a grant of 1,250 acres of land in this area in 1861. Land developer Jacamiah Seaman Daugherty bought the property from Reynolds' heirs in 1888, and in 1889 he granted a right-of-way to the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad. His plans to develop a townsite almost came to an end when he faced foreclosure in 1893, but the land was purchased by Francis I. Meston, who retained Daugherty to oversee its development.

In 1894, after the community was named Dairy by its surveyors, Dr. John S. Magee and his wife, Alief Ozelda Magee, moved here from Ellis County and became the town's first settlers. They were joined by more settlers, and in 1895 Alief Magee applied for a U. S. Post Office for the town. Named Alief by the postal service, the post office operated from her home.

Comprised of farms, ranches, a general store, depot, schools, and churches, Dairy endured despite devastating floods. Rice farming began after 1900, enhancing the area's economic base. The citizens formed the first Harris County Flood Control District in 1909 and established an independent school district in 1911. Although much of the town (renamed Alief in 1917) was annexed by Houston in the 1970s, it retains its identity.

### **1865                      Freedman's Town. Origins of**

West Dallas Avenue at Heiner - Houston

Marker Text: Located in Houston's Fourth Ward, the original Freedman's Town settlement was founded soon after the emancipation of enslaved blacks on June 19, 1865, at the end of the Civil War in Texas. Positioned west of downtown and directly south of Buffalo Bayou, the community gradually expanded to the south and west during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Freedman's Town quickly became the economic and cultural center of Houston's African American population, growing throughout the 1880s and 1890s. The neighborhood stretched from Buffalo Bayou south to Sutton Street, and west from Milam and Travis streets to Taft Street. A streetcar line was built west along what is now W. Dallas Street, and another line ran along Andrews to present Wilson Street, and north to Robin Street. Portions of the district, which included farmland, remained sparsely settled for several decades. The neighborhood changed as residents built many small wood-frame cottages, as well as a number of larger T-plan and L-plan houses. Commercial structures included several corner grocery stores and restaurants, as well as apartment buildings and boardinghouses.

Historic churches such as Antioch Missionary Baptist, Good Hope Missionary Baptist, Shiloh Missionary Baptist, St. James United Methodist and Bethel Baptist played important roles in the community. Clergymen from the churches were among the most prominent early leaders in Freedman's Town and included the Revs. Jack Yates, Ned P. Pullum and Jeremiah Smith. Cultural institutions included a high school, hospital and Carnegie Library. City growth and urban renewal later in the 20th century changed the boundaries and the character of Freedman's Town.

### **1865, 1900                      Freedman's Town, Twentieth Century Development of**

200 block West Gray Ave at Taft St - Houston

Marker Text: Founded on the south banks of Buffalo Bayou soon after the June 19, 1865 emancipation of enslaved blacks, Freedman's Town became the center of Houston's African American community. It originally stretched from Buffalo Bayou south to Sutton Street, and west from Milam and Travis streets to Taft Street.

During its heyday in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Freedman's Town featured hundreds of houses, many of which were small "shotgun" frame dwellings, a common folk building type found along the Gulf Coast in Louisiana and Texas. Most often associated with African American neighborhoods, the shotgun form has been traced to black residents of Haiti, and through them to original homelands in Africa. The neighborhood also featured a number of larger homes built by community leaders, including the Rev. Jack Yates, his son Rutherford B. Yates, Alfred Smith, the Rev. Jeremiah Smith and the Rev. Ned



P. Pullum. Churches and schools in Freedman's Town largely formed the basis for a strong and proud community identity. In addition, the neighborhood featured many businesses and institutions, including a high school, library, hospital and newspapers.

By the 1930s, Freedman's Town was the economic center for black Houston, the location of a high percentage of the city's black-owned businesses. From 1940 to the present, though, increased area development, including urban renewal programs and highway construction, has adversely affected Freedman's Town. Due to the perseverance of community residents, a large portion of the neighborhood was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

### **1860s            Kohrville**

11000 Gatesden Drive - Tomball

Marker Text: Early settlers came to this part of Harris County from distant lands. French-born Eugene Pillot, his son Nick and son-in-law J.C. Sellers operated the Pillot and Sellers Sawmill on Pillot Gully in the 1860s, when the area was known as Pillotville. By 1870, Paul Kohrmann had arrived from Baden, Germany. The following year, he was naturalized, and in 1872 he married Agnes Othila Tautenhahn. Near this site, the Kohrmanns owned a general store, which also housed a post office from 1881 to 1911. Paul Kohrmann was the first postmaster, serving until his death in 1894, when Agnes was appointed postmistress. She served until 1911 when the post office closed. Agnes died in 1932, and both she and Paul are buried here in the Kohrmann Family Cemetery. The general store and Kohrville post office served as the social center of a widely dispersed population. In the late 19th century, families arrived from Prussia, Denmark, Ireland and England, as well as several Southern states. African Americans also moved here from the Piney Point area west of Houston. The locale had multiple schools, churches, sawmills and a cotton gin in the early 20th century but remained sparsely populated until suburban growth occurred. All that remains today of the original historic Kohrville to remind us of the Kohrmann family and other early settlers and their contribution to the community is an area designated as Kohrmann Park, adjacent to the Kohrmann Family Cemetery.

### **1870s            Kohrville Community**

18218/18202 Theiss Mail Route Road - Klein

Marker Text: In the 1870s, former slaves from Alabama and Mississippi settled on Cypress Creek, near a store owned by German immigrants Paulin and Agnes Kohrmann. The Kohrville Community, centered on farming, ranching and lumber industries, offered schools for white and black students. When area schools consolidated, Kohrville became part of Klein I.S.D.; African American students attended Kohrville School. In the late 1940s, the school district financed a new school for them. An architect, probably Alfred C. Finn, designed the new schoolhouse, which was later moved to this site. The school district was desegregated in the 1960s. Kohrville and its neighboring communities now are part of the ever-growing Houston suburbs.

### **1873            Aldine [Community]**

905 Aldine-Bender Road - Aldine

Marker Text: The railroad arrived in this area, first called Prairie Switch, in 1873. The Aldine Post Office was established in 1896; twenty-five to thirty families, most of Swedish descent, settled on Aldine's fertile land. Here they grew such products as Satsuma oranges, pears and magnolia figs. In 1900 developer E. C. Robertson and his partner, F. W. Colby of Kansas, began to market parcels of land to out-of-state speculators, many of whom bought tracts sight unseen. A Presbyterian Church was organized from a Union Sabbath School in 1902, and the town began to grow. It soon boasted a hotel and general store, a two-room schoolhouse erected on this site in 1910, and a cemetery deeded for community use in 1911.

Aldine resident J. C. Carpenter operated a small fig cannery until 1914 or 1915 when the Carpenter Fig Company opened a cannery nearby. Reportedly one of the largest fig preserving plants in the U. S., it employed twenty-five to thirty people during the canning season. The fig industry died out from 1918 to 1920 because of freezes, blight and lack of sugar during World War I.

Dairy farms replaced fruit farms and the Magnolia Oil Company established a large crude oil pumping station in Aldine in 1923. The Aldine Railroad Depot shut down in 1931 or 1932, and the post office closed in January 1935. The community turned to automobiles for transportation. Farmers began marketing their wares in Houston. The town of Aldine gradually declined. In 1932 four area common school districts joined to form the Aldine Independent School District. Now a part of the metropolis of Houston, the townsite of Aldine remains only in the annals of Texas history.

## **1873            Spring, Town of**

403 Main - Spring

Marker Text: Initially a farming community supported by crops, including sugar cane and cotton, Spring was platted by the Houston & Great Northern Railroad in 1873. That same year, Callahan Pickette became the town's first postmaster. In its early years, Spring served as a commercial center for the surrounding area. It was also a focal point for German settlers, including Carl Wunsche, who was prominent in the town's development. The area still has a strong German heritage.

A new rail line reached Spring in the early 20th century and, with a roundhouse and railway shops, the town grew in importance as a rail center. Developer R. I. Robinson subdivided land south of the original town, and the commercial area shifted to accommodate the rail junction. The railroads facilitated the development of the lumber industry; Spring boasted a number of mills, both large and small, in the boom era of lumber production. With the boom came the need for new businesses, including hotels, saloons, an opera house, gambling houses, a hospital and a bank. In 1907, residents established the Spring Independent School District.

The loss of the roundhouse and the onset of Prohibition led to population decline, and the saloons, hotels, and other rail-supported businesses closed in the 1920s. Still, the dwindling community persisted, creating a volunteer fire department in the 1950s and sustaining its school district, which integrated in the mid-1960s. As the population began to grow again in the early 1970s, new businesses opened, including many specialty shops. With its proximity to a growing urban center and, itself an area commercial center, Spring continues to attract new residents and businesses but retains its unique identity and its link to its early history.

## **1880s            Humble, City of**

### **110 West Main - Humble**

Marker Text: A pioneer oil boom town. Originated as crossroads community named for settler Pleasant Smith Humble (1835?-1912), who lived here before 1889, hewing his timber into railroad ties, mining gravel from his land, keeping store, and serving as justice of the peace. Neighbors included the Bender, Durdin, Isaacks, Lee, Slaughter, and Williams families. Economic bases were farms and sawmills. The post office opened 1902.

In 1904 C. E. Barrett (1866-1926) drilled for oil in this area, securing small production on Moonshine Hill. On Jan. 7, 1905, he brought in the No. 2 Beaty Well which yielded 8,500 barrels a day, opening the great boom. From a village of 700, Humble grew at once into a town of 20,000. Field production-- the largest in Texas for the year 1905-- was 15,594,923 barrels of oil. The field was named for the town. A group of its operators, including Ross S. Sterling, later (1931-33) governor of Texas, in 1911 incorporated a new oil company named for the field, thus spreading into the annals of world commerce the town's name.

Production from several strata here exceeded the total for fabulous Spindletop by 1946. Known as the greatest salt dome field, Humble still produces and the town for which it was named continued to thrive.

## **1890            Houston Heights**

### **1302 Heights Boulevard - Houston**

Marker Text: Representatives of the American Loan and Trust Company of Omaha, Nebraska, came to Houston in 1890 to scout locations for land development. Under the leadership of O. M. Carter, D. D. Cooley, and others, company directors purchased 1,756 acres of land northwest of Houston. They led efforts to electrify Houston's streetcar system in 1891 and extended the lines to their new community, named Houston Heights due to its elevation 23 feet above that of downtown Houston.

Directors of the Omaha and South Texas Land Company, formed by American Loan and Trust in 1892, developed streets, sidewalks, and utility systems; built and marketed homes; and encouraged the establishment of business and industry in Houston Heights. The city of Houston Heights was incorporated in 1896, and W. G. Love served as first mayor. He was followed in that office by John A. Milroy, David Barker, Robert F. Isbell, and J. B. Marmion.

Seeking a broader tax base with which to support their public schools, voters of Houston Heights agreed to annexation by the city of Houston in 1918. Houston Heights grew rapidly in the 20th century, but continued to maintain its unique identity. It remains a distinctive neighborhood with many historic structures.

## **1890            La Porte, City of**

### **604 West Fairmont Parkway - La Porte**

Marker Text: Colorado-based land developers A. M. York, J. H. York, I. R. Holmes, and Tom Lee formed the La Porte Land and Town Company in 1890. They purchased over 1,000 acres of land in this area and began laying out town lots in the fall of 1891. Edward York later joined his two brothers and the other investors to organize the La Porte Investment Company.

Advertising to prospective settlers in New York State and the Midwest, the developers began selling lots by January 1892. Soon a hotel, general mercantile store, and U. S. Post Office opened in the new town. The La Porte, Houston, and Northern Railroad, chartered in 1892, completed a line to Sylvan Beach Resort in 1899. Along with agriculture, the beach became the town's main economic mainstay.

The original investment company became insolvent by 1895, but a new company purchased the land in 1898 and continued development efforts. Disastrous effects of the 1900 storm, as well as another storm and a fire in 1915, the discovery of the Goose Creek oil field in 1916, and the industrialization of the area following World War II, resulted in an increased population and a shift away from the agricultural character of the town.

## **1892                      Deer Park [City of]**

1402 Center St. - Deer Park

Marker Text: Illinois native Simeon Henry West (1827-1920) settled in this vicinity in 1892 hoping to develop the area, with its mild climate and proximity to waterways, into a farming and trading center. By the year's end, he had purchased property and platted the town of Deer Park, naming it after a nearby private park inhabited by many deer. After completing the Deer Park Hotel in 1893, West marketed his development primarily to Northerners. More than ninety settlers moved here, attracted by the prospects for fruit and tobacco farming and the trade links to the Houston & Northern Railway and Houston's waterways that West was developing.

The promising town was nearly destroyed in the hurricane of 1900, after which every family except one returned North. A few people moved to Deer Park in later years. In 1905, the Edwin Rice Brown family leased as their family home the Deer Park Hotel, the focal point of area social life. However, the town's population remained very small.

Not until 1928, when Shell Chemical Company relocated here, did a new period of growth begin. Deer Park's business district, churches, and schools were reestablished, and in 1948 the citizens of Deer Park voted to incorporate.

## **1892                      Almeda [City of]**

13000 block of FM 521/Almeda Road - Almeda

Marker Text: In 1892 Illinois investors bought land here, near a pre-Civil War railroad line, and platted the town of Almeda. With its mild climate, the town was marketed as a citrus farming community, but unusually severe freezes caused many farmers to turn to dairy production by the 1920s. Almeda became a prosperous dairy farming town. In 1893 residents founded a school district that served children from parts of three counties. Although Almeda became part of the city of Houston in 1959, it remains a part of local history. Incising: This marker is paid for by families coming by 1900 J. Harris Taylor Pretty Riley Dugger J. Parker A. Parker Edmundson Anderson Birdsall Ormsby Mowery

**1893**

### **Bayridge / Morgan's Point**

514 Bayridge Road - Morgan's Point

Marker Text: The peninsula on Galveston Bay known as Morgan's Point was named for early landowner Colonel James Morgan. Later the area became a favorite summer retreat for wealthy Houston residents who sought refuge from the oppressive heat and humidity of the city. The bluff attracted Gulf breezes and boasted spectacular views and recreational potential.

In 1893 twelve prominent Houston families formed the Bay Ridge Park Association and acquired 40 acres of land on which they constructed a resort community for summer residency. To allow each family beach front property the land was platted into long narrow lots chosen by ballots.

The first houses built were modest one-and two-story frame dwellings with verandas; most featured Eastlake and Queen Anne style detailing. Homes built in the early 20th century were designed by renowned architects and reflected various styles including Mediterranean revival, colonial revival, and prairie school. Among the many grand houses is one patterned after the White House built for Texas Governor Ross Sterling and his wife Maude. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the area is one of Texas' most significant seaside residential developments.

**1907**

### **Woodland Heights Community**

3300 Beauchamp & 300 Highland - Houston

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.

**1907**

### **Courtlandt Place**

## Courtlandt Place & 3300 Bagby - Houston

Marker Text: Platted in 1907 on land once owned by area pioneer Mrs. Obedience Smith, Courtlandt Place was established as a private neighborhood for Houston's elite. Encompassing 15.47 acres of land, it is a showcase of impressive homes designed by some of the most prominent Texas architects of the early twentieth century, including Birdsall P. Briscoe, Alfred Finn, John Staub, Sanguinet & Staats, and Olle J. Lorehn. The Courtlandt Place neighborhood was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

## **1908**                      **Bellaire [City of]**

### 7008 South Rice Avenue - Bellaire

Marker Text: William Wright Baldwin, president of the South End Land Company, founded Bellaire in 1908 on part of the 9,449-acre ranch once owned by William Marsh Rice, benefactor of Rice Institute (now Rice University). Baldwin surveyed the eastern 1,000 acres of the ranch into small truck farms, which he named Westmoreland Farms. He platted Bellaire in the middle of the farms to serve as an exclusive residential neighborhood and agricultural trading center. The project was separated from Houston by approximately six miles of prairie.

South End Land Company advertisements, targeted to Midwestern farmers, noted that Bellaire ("Good Air") was named for the area's Gulf breezes. The original townsite was bounded by Palmetto, First, Jessamine, and Sixth (now Ferris) streets. Bellaire Boulevard and an electric streetcar line connected Bellaire to Houston. The town was incorporated in 1918, and C. P. Younts served as first mayor.

The post-war building boom in the late 1940s and early 1950s resulted in rapid population growth. Completely surrounded by the expanding city of Houston by 1949, Bellaire nevertheless retained its independence and its own city government.

## **1908**                      **Independence Heights**

### 7818 North Main St. & 38th St. - Houston

Marker Text: Promoted by the Wright Land Company, the Independence Heights community began about 1908. Many black families purchased lots and built their own homes. A school was established in 1911.

Businesses in Independence Heights included retail stores, restaurants, building contractors, lumberyards, a blacksmith shop, tailor, and barber shop. Fraternal organizations were formed, as well as a number of churches: New Hope Missionary Baptist Church (founded in 1912 at this site), Green Chapel A. M. E., St. Paul C. M. E., Ebenezer M. E., Concord Missionary Baptist, and North Main Church of God in Christ.

By 1915 there were about four hundred residents. In that year an election was held and the city was incorporated. George O. Burgess was elected the first mayor. City improvements over the next few years included the shell paving of streets, plank sidewalks, and the installation of a municipal water system. O. L. Hubbard and Arthur L. McCullough, Sr. also served mayoral terms. In 1928 another election was held

in which the city organization was dissolved. Independence Heights was annexed by the city of Houston on December 26, 1929. The Independence Heights name is still associated with the area.

## **1909                    Magnolia Park**

907 76th Street & Avenue J - Houston

Marker Text: Originally developed as a sprawling excursion park by John Thomas Brady in 1890, Magnolia Park earned its name from its abundance of Magnolia trees planted in the area starting in 1909, the Magnolia Park Land Company redeveloped the park into two residential subdivisions, Magnolia Park (1909) and Central Park (1912), which were incorporated together in 1913 as the City of Magnolia Park. Covering two square miles, the city was bordered on the north and east by Buffalo Bayou and the ship channel, on the south by Brays Bayou and on the west by rail lines. Eventually, the City of Magnolia Park was annexed by the City of Houston in 1926.

While the founders of Magnolia Park were of European descent, persons of Mexican descent have dominated most of its history, making it one of Houston's first Mexican American communities. The area experience dramatic growth in its Mexican American population as Mexican citizens left their county to escape the turmoil of the Mexican revolution of the 1910s.

Magnolia Park's two Roman Catholic churches, Immaculate Conception (1911) and Immaculate Heart of Mary (1925), have served its Hispanic residents for over 80 years. The area's oldest public schools - Franklin Elementary, DeZavala Elementary and Edison Junior High - all predate 1926. Major community parks include Hidalgo Park (1927) and DeZavala Park (1945). Magnolia Park Post 472 of the American Legion was chartered in 1928 and continues to serve the community. Council 60 of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) - Houston's first - was formed here in 1934. Today, Magnolia Park continues as a thriving Hispanic community in Houston.

## **1910                    El Barrio del Alacrán**

1900 blk of Runnels, near North Hamilton intersection - Houston

Marker Text: Between 1910 and 1920, Houston attracted a large number of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans to the Second Ward where the old Frost Town and Schrimpf's Field neighborhoods offered inexpensive housing for industrial workers. In the 1930s, the Spanish-speaking residents gave the area a new name - El Alacrán, The Scorpion. Churches, the Rusk Settlement House, Rusk School and sports leagues provided social and educational services for the community. Urban renewal and highway construction in the 1950s demolished El Alacrán. Once a notoriously impoverished neighborhood, El Alacrán gave many residents a working start toward full integration into American society.

## **1910                    West University Place**

**3800 University Blvd. – Houston or WUP**

Marker Text: Tennessee politician Ben W. Hooper led investors in forming the West End Realty Co. in 1910. They chose land near Rice Institute, which opened in 1912, and created West University Place, connected to Houston by streetcar. Homesites sold primarily to young, middle-class families. Trying to address the area's frequent flooding, citizens incorporated in 1924, electing L. B. Ryon as Mayor. The city's second Mayor, Harold B. Schlesinger, helped develop a strong infrastructure. With several additions, the city grew to its current size, approximately two square miles. Today, the independent, viable community features park space and other amenities for its several thousand residents.

## **1910            Acres Homes Community**

West Montgomery & W. Little York - Houston

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 Gulfbank 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)

## **1927            Frenchtown Community**

2900 Quitman Rd and US 59 north frontage road - Houston

Marker Text: A distinct ethnic cultural group, "Creoles of Color," developed in Louisiana in the 18th and 19th centuries. With roots in French, Spanish and Native American cultures, they spoke standard or Creole French and practices Catholicism. Free persons before the Civil War, they lost their special status with the onset of Jim Crow laws, and many turned to sharecropping to survive but suffered further with declining agricultural prices and drought. Escaping the devastating 1927 Mississippi River flood, many fled west via highways and rail lines.

In Houston, they took jobs in industries related to oil, construction and railroads. They established a tight-knit, culturally unique community called Frenchtown, today bounded by Collingsworth Street, Russell Street, Liberty Road, Quitman Street and Jensen Drive. In 1929, residents built Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church, which later established a parochial school. Families maintained their cultural



identity by marrying within the community and closely supporting their neighbors. They held la-las, social gatherings centered on food and music, to raise funds for building new homes. Zydeco music, a blending of Creole la-la and the blues, also played a vital role in distinguishing this community.

Frenchtown began to lose its identity as a Creole enclave after World War II as segregation ended, U.S. Highway 59 expanded and more non-Creole families moved here. Later, the popularity of Zydeco music and a renewed interest in Creole culture brought attention to this unique community and led to various preservation efforts. The Frenchtown Community Association has aided in the reclaiming of this vibrant, distinctive area of Houston.

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