

THE HERITAGE SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

2005/2006

Founded in 1954 to save the historic Kellum Noble House from demolition, The Heritage Society (THS), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is dedicated to preserving Houston's past through the acquisition and preservation of historic structures. Since its founding, The Heritage Society has brought eight additional structures to Sam Houston Park. Each of the historic structures represents a different developmental stage and cultural influence in Houston's diverse history. THS also maintains a museum that features both permanent and changing exhibits. Together, the houses and the museum represent the most complete representation of Houston's cultural history in existence. The nine historic structures include



Old Place (1823); Kellum-Noble House (1847); Nichols-Rice-Cherry House (1850); Fourth Ward Cottage (1866); Pillot House (1868); San Felipe Cottage (1868); Yates House (1870); St. John Church (1891); Staiti House (1905). Each structure is authentically restored to reflect its original period furnishings and to complement the ethnic backgrounds of the occupants who first inhabited them.



MISSION

The purpose of The Heritage Society is to preserve the complete history of the community and region through preservation and restoration of historic structures, exhibition of historical artifacts, and presentation of educational programs which focus on Houston and Harris County's diverse past, and its relationship to the present and future.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Heritage Society offers a unique venue for children and adults to enhance their knowledge of Houston's diverse history. The Heritage Society utilizes the talents of a corps of well-trained volunteers and staff members to conduct exciting and educational guided tours for audiences young and old. These trained docents offer tours six days a week to a variety of groups and to individuals from all over the world. The number of museum and tour visitors over the past year totaled 9,047 with an additional 193,225 visitors attending events in Sam Houston Park which introduced them to the nine historic structures that THS preserves and protects. The Heritage Society partners with a number of organizations that host events in the park in order to provide information about each of the structures and to provide tours and/or future complementary or reduced-price admission opportunities for attendees.



The Heritage Society partnered with the John P. McGovern Foundation to further enhance the educational opportunities for children and school groups. Support from the John P. McGovern Foundation enabled THS to provide complimentary tours to children and school groups. In addition, The Heritage Society worked closely with educators to present tours that are tailored to support students' learning objectives. Upon completion of the tour, students received a coloring book featuring all nine of The Heritage Society's historic structures. THS is constantly looking to improve and better meet the needs of the schools. This year, pre- and post-tour tests were administered to school groups to gauge the effectiveness of the information provided during the tours. Results show a 10-point average increase in post-tour test scores



During 2005/2006, The Heritage Society provided four free Family Days to the community. Family Days provide children



with a stimulating environment in which to learn about their shared heritage. By utilizing culturally-appropriate arts and crafts projects, THS was able to offer entertaining and educational activities to a variety of age groups. On September 11, 2005, families were invited to Sam Houston Park for *Red White and Blue Family Day*. Children did crafts and created American flag pins. In November, THS celebrated Texas history with the *Harvest in Texas Family Day* where children learned about the indigenous trees of the region. Sunday, March 5, 2006, families came to the park for *Women of Sam Houston Park Family Day* to celebrate Women's History Month by focusing on some of the women who lived in early Houston in our own historic structures. Children traveled back in time to meet Zerviah Noble, Emma Richardson Cherry, and Odelia Staiti. They also learned firsthand how they lived. Families toured three structures and enjoyed old fashioned games, crafts and refreshments. On May 6, 2006, THS hosted a *May Flower Fest Family Day*. Thirty-five visitors came to the park to make flowers, dragonflies, chameleons, a mural and Mother's Day cards. In addition, children shared in friendly competition with horseshoes and a bean bag toss. The Houston Arboretum & Nature Center and Houston Museum of Natural Science Cockrell Butterfly Center provided information about our local environment and examples of some of the inhabitants.

The Heritage Society's educational activities are not limited to Sam Houston Park. THS provided various outreach programs which included slide and trunk shows. Slide shows included *Families of the Park; Steeples and Stained Glass; Texas and Houston History; 170 Years of Houston History; The Covington Place; Reverend Jack Yates; Staiti House and Gardens; Christmas in the Park; and Sam and Margaret: Their Life Together*. Slide shows are especially effective for older children and adults.

Trunk shows that were offered included *Pioneer Trunk Show, Great Gizmo Show and Gourds Galore*. Costumed presenters from The Heritage Society took trunks filled with reproduction objects from everyday life in the 19th century to classrooms and youth groups across Houston for a 50-minute presentation about life in early Texas. Children handled the objects in these trunks. Trunk shows compliment Texas and American history curricula and are most appropriate for children five to nine years of age. In 2005/2006, these outreach programs traveled to garden clubs, church groups, community centers, assisted living facilities, day care facilities, libraries and schools.

Educational programming was not limited to children. THS hosted the Hill-Finger Noontime Lecture Series for its second year. Each month a speaker was invited to lecture on their area of expertise. The free lectures were held on the third Thursday of each month. Speakers for the 2005/2006 series included Dr. Joseph Pratt who spoke on the University of Houston's current effort to compile oral and written histories of the City of Houston;



Jan De Vault who presented recent archeological findings of the Battle of San Jacinto that cast doubt on traditional interpretations of the events that transpired; historian Betty Chapman who discussed the visionary founders, shrewd planning and political ploys that provided the deep roots for Houston on the banks of Buffalo Bayou; Janice Thompson who presented her research on the effect of the railroad on Spring, Texas; Dr. Fred L. McGhee who gave a lecture entitled "The Texas Revolution and Annexation Re-considered: Revisiting the Abolitionist Thesis"; Ann Becker who spoke on the history of John Sessums, one of Houston's pioneers for African American equality and the only black member of the Houston Light Guard; author Richard Reynolds presented a program on his book, on Texas Then and Now; and Randy Tibbits and Henri Gadbois, curators of the *Early Houston Artists in Houston Collections* exhibit, who presented a guided tour of the exhibit.

COLLECTIONS

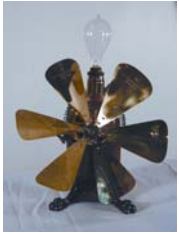
Over the past year, many items with a Houston regional provenance were added to The Heritage Society collections. These included items from the Rice, Shamrock and Rendezvous hotels, Leo's Mexican Restaurant, Houston Astros, Gamblers, and an Eastlake mantel clock with a Houston, Texas imprint. However, the most important addition to the collection



was more than 250 Bob Bailey Studios photographs, prints and calendars donated to The Heritage Society by the Houston Photographic and Architectural Foundation Trust, James P. Lee, Trustee. The Bob Bailey Studios Collection captures important moments and places in Houston's history. The Heritage Society has worked with the University of Texas, which owns the copyrights to these photographs, to exhibit and share these treasures of Houston's history with the public.

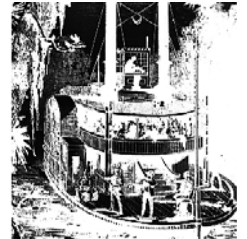
EXHIBITIONS

THS presented five special exhibitions during 2005/2006. Exhibitions were funded in part by grants from the City of Houston through the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County.



Beating the Heat: Staying Cool Throughout the Years, was on display from June 7, 2005 through August 28, 2005. This exhibit featured an assortment of antique fans from private collections. The exhibit was brought to life by guest curators Alan Bies and Steve Boehck. It highlighted the role of the electric fan in America's quest to keep cool and displayed a wide variety of fans from the simple and functional to the ornate and elite. This exhibit intrigued the Houston community and brought a wide variety of people to the museum.

Navigation through Time: Celebrating Houston's Maritime History traced the port's evolution from inspired idea to "larger than life" reality. The exhibit featured documents and photographs, as well as personal artifacts of individuals whose lives were shaped by the port's creation. The exhibit ran from September 6, 2005 through October 30, 2005 and was made possible through funding from the Houston Port Authority.



From November 8, 2005 through December 31, 2005, The Heritage Society presented *In the Nick of Time: A Look at the Beloved Holiday Icon*. From traditional depictions of Santa Claus to a sun-bathing Santa, the exhibit walked visitors through the diverse cultural history of Santa Claus looking not only at the icon as we know him today but at his evolution through history.

The Heritage Society celebrated Black History Month with an exhibit honoring the many talents that African Americans have brought to Houston over the years. *African American Performing Arts in Houston* ran from January 10 through February 26, 2006. Exhibition partners included The Ensemble Theatre, Huey Long, Houston Ebony Opera Guild, Houston PBS and Project GRAD. In conjunction with the show, students who are involved in Project GRAD created works of art that reflected their African American heritage. Gretchen Hollingsworth served as the guest curator for the show. A special reception was held for the student artists and for legendary musician Huey Long.



Houston from Behind the Lens: Photographs from the Bob Bailey Studios Collection ran from March 7 through April 23, 2006. Guest curator James Saye transformed the museum into a trip through the streets of early Houston. For the first time in more than a decade, a major exhibition of the photographs of Bob and Marvin Bailey, covering Houston area scenes, people, buildings and events from the 1930s to the 1990s, was on display.

The final exhibit of the fiscal year was *Early Houston Artists in Houston Collections* which was on view from May 2 through June 25, 2006. Rarely exhibited paintings from local collections were on display in the museum. This comprehensive exhibition of early Houston artists was guest curated by Bill Reaves, Henri Gadbois and Randy Tibbits. Organized in collaboration with The Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art (CASETA) and Houston Early Texas Art



Group (HETAG), the exhibit consisted of fifty-six works by fifty-two Houston artists who worked between 1900 and 1965. The artwork came from individual and institutional collectors in Houston. Featured artists included Forrest Bess, Evelyne Bessell, John Biggers, Emma Richardson Cherry, Kermit Oliver, John William Orth, Buck Schiwetz and Grace Spaulding John. The exhibit provided a glimpse into some of Houston's finest collections of early Texas art, and featured a broad array of subjects and styles utilized by local artists working on the Houston scene during this period.

PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES

The Heritage Society exists primarily to conserve and preserve historic structures and present material culture and lifestyles through the display of the decorative arts in our structures and museum. Our structures are the cornerstone of our mission and THS is fully committed to their constant care and attention. Constant maintenance is required to ensure that The Heritage Society's historic structures withstand the harsh Houston climate. The hot, humid Gulf Coast weather, the pollution from the nearby freeways and the constant flow of visitors affect each of the buildings.

The Heritage Society reached a milestone in 2005/2006 by finishing the exterior restoration of the 1868 Pillot House which had been heavily damaged by flooding. Since work began in December 2004, the house was moved off of its original site, the grade at that location was raised, and the house was moved back to the newly elevated site at 40.5 feet above sea level- well above the 100 year flood plain. Pillot House received a new roof, the side porch was replaced, shutters were replaced, a handicap ramp was constructed and the exterior was painted. The relocation and exterior repair of Pillot House were made possible in large part by a challenge grant provided by Wortham Foundation, Inc. Due to the extensive damage to the Pillot House, much of the Heritage Society's resources were focused on completing its relocation and restoration. With the exterior phase complete, THS was able to turn its attention towards key projects throughout the park.



One of the main objectives of The Heritage Society over the past twelve months has been to secure funding for a number of other major maintenance projects for the other structures in the park. While all the structures underwent routine maintenance, THS turned its attention to Staiti House and Kellum-Noble House. The Staiti House needed repair to and replacement of damaged components of the building: milling



and replacing damaged siding and fascia; replacing gutters; repairing porch balusters and handrails; re-decking porches where needed; re-setting concrete supports for wrought iron fencing; and protecting the house with new exterior paint. Work on the west side of the structure was completed and the north side will be addressed during 2006/2007. For the Kellum-Noble house, experts were sought to make recommendations for the stabilization of the foundation. A "Request for Qualifications" was presented and five structural engineering firms replied. During May, 2006, Board Members and staff interviewed potential consultants with an eye to starting structural monitoring of the site in June, 2006.



Support for these projects was provided by The Brown Foundation, Houston Endowment, Inc., Wortham Foundation, Rockwell Fund, Vivian L. Smith Foundation, Cullen Foundation, and others. Preservation of historic structures is contingent upon regularly scheduled maintenance, careful observation and inspection, and swift action in addressing problems. All Heritage Society structures are under constant barrage from the elements and require that THS be vigilant in its preservation efforts. These projects will allow THS to preserve and protect these structures for future generations.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Heritage Society's revenue in 2005/2006 was \$1,476,045, an increase of 44% over 2004/2005. Expenses during 2005/2006 were \$1,204,442, an increase of 11%. Of this, \$963,384 (80%) was spent on program services; \$107,539 (9%) was in management and general expenses; and \$133,519 (11%) was spent for fund raising activities. The organization's net assets increased from \$2,311,249 in 2005 to \$2,582,852 in 2006.

The Board's passion for the restoration and programming that THS does was reaffirmed by their enthusiastic support over the year. Board members' support creates the foundation upon which The Heritage Society is able to grow. Thirty-two Board members governed THS during 2005/2006. Their expertise ranges over fields such as decorative arts, architecture, finance, history, law, and cultural anthropology. Their diverse interests and



expertise create a strong base for decision making. Members of the Board of Directors were William J. Hill, President; Jerry Finger, Vice President; Doris Cantrell, Vice President; Cy Clark, Vice President; Evelyn Boatwright, Vice President; Jeremiah Splaine, Vice President; James L. Goettee Jr., Treasurer; Janiece M. Longoria, Parliamentarian; Willie J. Alexander; Betty Cabaniss; Jane Ellen Cable; Janet Casstevens; Sylvia Clauder; Barbara FitzGerrell; James E. Furr; Howard L. Heald;

Catherine C. Hevrdejs; Sibley Kopmeier-Havlick; Harriet Latimer; Carol McDavid; Frank Medina; Gail Rosenthal; Carolyn Roth; Ruth M. Smith; Nelle Spates; Peggy W. Stuart; Julie Young Sudduth; Rich Walton; and Joanne Zumbrun. Jane Block, Ralph Pokluda, Molly Ladd Whitaker and El Franco Lee made up the Advisory Committee in 2005/2006. Alice Collette, The Heritage Society's Executive Director, and Joe Turner, Houston Parks and Recreation Department Director, served as ex-officio members of the Board.



Aside from Board support, THS hosted a number of fundraisers in 2005/2006 which were also an integral part of resource development. The Heritage Society Annual Candlelight Tour, the Estate Sale and the annual gala raised \$228,747 to support preservation, maintenance and education. This is a 30% increase over last year.



Candlelight Tour took place on December 9 and 10, 2005. It was chaired by Heritage Society Board Members Evelyn Boatwright and Joanne Zumbrun. More than 3,500 people came to Sam Houston Park to take a holiday trip into Texas history. The park was lit by candles and filled with music and characters in period costume. Each historic structure was traditionally decorated for the holidays. Candlelight Tour broke records for income by bringing in over \$60,000 and was able to do so in two nights instead of the customary three nights.

In 2005/2006 the Amazing Attic Sale was revamped, revitalized and renamed The Estate Sale. The Heritage Society moved away from the typical household items that were sold in years past and instead offered antiques and collectables for sale. Like Candlelight Tour, the Estate Sale went from being one night and two days to being one night and one day. The event was held in the historic River Oaks Shopping Center and was chaired by Heritage Society Board Member Cy Clark. The sale raised \$17,747. The event was made possible through a partnership with Weingarten Realty and Miresco.

The Way We Were, the Heritage Society's annual gala, was held on April 21, 2006, at the River Oaks Country Club. The gala was co-chaired by long time Heritage Society volunteers and Board Members, Jane Ellen Cable and Harriet Latimer. The event honored one of the Heritage Society's most beloved volunteers, Mary Lee Merrett. Guests enjoyed fine wines, a gourmet dinner, decorations provided by The Events Company, a live and silent auction, and danced the night away to David Caceres and Band.



In July, 2005, The Heritage Society's e-newsletter went live and ten email newsletter issues have since been sent out. Since July, the mailing list has increased by 23%. The information goes to local organizations such as the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Houston Library, Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Houston Downtown Management District, CACHH, downtown businesses, hotel concierges, individuals and a variety of media outlets. THS is also listed on more than 43 websites. THS received media coverage in Houston Chronicle, Houston Lifestyles & Homes, Houston Modern Luxury, 002, HTexas, Village News, and Houston Press. The Heritage Society was also featured on 106.9 FM (The Point) and KTRK Channel 13. Efforts to increase media coverage had a positive impact on the visibility of THS.

In 2005/2006, The Heritage Society implemented on-line giving. Visitors to The Heritage Society website were able to make online payments for tickets, memberships and general donations. Over half of the guests utilized the online method for the Estate Sale and one quarter used the online method for Candlelight. This addition has enabled THS to better serve its constituents.

Each year The Heritage Society forms and strengthens a number of partnerships in order to successfully serve the public. Of primary note is The Heritage Society's collaboration with the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department and Mayor's Office of Special Events. Collaboration with these two entities brings the public to the park and introduces them to the historic structures. In addition, THS worked with a number of festivals throughout the year including Houston International Festival and the Orange Show. Each year THS partners with the Houston Antiques Dealers Association (HADA) and provides volunteers for both their fall and spring shows. HADA was unable to have its fall show because evacuees from Hurricane Katrina were being housed in the George R. Brown Convention Center, however, THS did help with the spring show. The Heritage Society also collaborated with CASETA and HETAG in order to bring the exhibit *Houston Artists in Houston Collections* to life. A catalog was produced in conjunction with the exhibit. The Heritage Society also partnered with Project GRAD for the *African American Performing Arts* exhibit. Students' work was displayed in the museum. THS also worked closely with the school districts to provide tours that helped teachers meet requirements for the Texas Education Agency requirements.

VOLUNTEERS

Dedicated volunteers are a key component to the effectiveness of The Heritage Society. In 2005/2006 THS offered a number of volunteer opportunities and 887 volunteers participated. The Board of Directors, Museum Guides, Docents, Research Library Volunteers and others worked on a variety of projects providing 4,776 volunteer service hours. Docent and Guild meetings provided volunteers with additional training and a chance to augment their education. Aside from the roles as Docents and Museum Guides, volunteers participated in other activities which included the Estate Sale, Houston Antiques Dealers Association's spring show, Family Days, Candlelight Tour, and the San Jacinto Symposium.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Heritage Society is constantly working to fulfill its mission. In the coming months and years, THS will focus on major maintenance projects in the park. With the exterior work on Pillot completed, The Heritage Society is ready to re-interpret the interior. Completing the Pillot project will be a major milestone and put a successful end to the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Allison in 2001. Other crucial projects will involve the Kellum-Noble, Staiti, and San Felipe structures. These projects are of prime importance because of The Heritage Society's dedication to its mission to preserve and safeguard the structures for this generation and generations to come. Aside from working on these projects, THS will create lighting and fencing plans that will aid in its ability to protect and preserve its historical assets. The Heritage Society will also work to become more user-friendly and accessible to the public. The Heritage Society wishes to acknowledge the longstanding and generous support of the City of Houston and its Parks and Recreation Department, and our community's dedication to preserving Houston's rich history.