



ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 1, 2017 – MAY 31, 2018



1100 BAGBY STREET HOUSTON, TEXAS 77002
www.heritagesociety.org



MISSION

The mission of The Heritage Society (THS) is to tell the stories of the diverse history of Houston and Texas through collections, exhibits, educational programs, film, video and other content.

This 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization was founded in 1954 by Ima Hogg, Pat Fleming, Birdsall Briscoe, Kenneth Franzheim and other public-spirited Houstonians to save the 1847 Kellum-Noble House from demolition. Recognizing the importance of the house to Houston's educational, entrepreneurial and cultural history, THS founders successfully developed one of the city's first and most enduring public/private partnerships.

Located in Sam Houston Park, at the western edge of downtown Houston, THS manages a campus of ten restored historic buildings furnished in the styles of their respective eras, together with a museum gallery. The buildings serve as the primary exhibition spaces for a collection of more than 23,000 historic artifacts, including furnishings, paintings, photographs, decorative items, textiles, books and personal papers. With a professional staff of 14 and 110 volunteers, THS maintains a busy year-round schedule of exhibitions, lectures, workshops, school tours and special events. It produces short and feature-length historical documentaries, conducts teacher's workshops and hosts a mix of public and private events.

AUDIENCE

In FY 2017-2018, an estimated 68,000 people visited The Heritage Society's campus in Sam Houston Park. Of those who toured THS's historic buildings and museum gallery, 40 percent were from the Greater Houston area, with the remaining 60 percent coming from Texas, other states and numerous foreign countries. Thirty percent were students and children ages 17 years or younger; 45 percent were adults between the ages of 18 and 64; and 25 percent were seniors ages 65 and older. THS visitors were 62 percent White, 16 percent Latino, 15 percent African-American, 6 percent Asian, and one percent other or multiracial. An additional 1,000 people attended THS lunchtime and evening lectures, with 2,500 attending THS events and community engagement programs. The historical campus also serves as a living, daily reminder of Houston's heritage to the more than 300,000 visitors who come to Sam Houston Park for festivals, charitable athletic events and civic celebrations each year.

HURRICANE HARVEY

The most dramatic event of the year was, of course, Hurricane Harvey. Thanks to the preventive measures taken after Tropical Storm Allison, THS's facilities came through the storm largely unscathed, and emergency funding from the NEH, HAA and Humanities Texas covered the insurance deductible for the disaster. Sadly,

the 1868 Pillot House took on 8” of water. The floors and walls in Pillot have now been restored, but the house will no longer be used to display collections.

Though THS re-opened to the public within days of the storm, lengthy school closures led to a significant reduction in student visitors, as schools cut back on field trips to make up for lost class time. Another casualty was our traditional Candlelight Tour fundraiser, which was cancelled to reallocate staff time and resources to cleanup and restoration.

EXHIBITIONS



Tropical (Im)pression: A Gulf Coast Hurricane Retrospective (May – August 2017)

Just in time for Harvey, THS hosted this traveling exhibition created by the Museum of the Gulf Coast. In 2010, the museum in Port Arthur initiated the Hurricane

Retrospective Project, an effort to document the recent history of hurricanes in the southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana. The Museum solicited photographs and personal stories from coastal residents who lived through Hurricanes Rita and Ike. Hundreds of submissions poured in from amateur and professional photographers, businesses and government agencies. The resulting exhibition graphically conveyed the collective “impression” that recent hurricanes made on the Gulf Coast region from Galveston, Texas to Cameron Parish, Louisiana.

The Great Migration: UH Honors College Student Projects (August – September 2017)



During the Great Migration (1917-1970), more than six million African Americans left the rural South for other regions of the United States, including some 44,000 who moved to Houston. This diaspora transformed American culture, society, demographics and politics in myriad ways. To commemorate the centennial of the Great Migration, UH Honors History students examined the journeys of African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Asian Americans to Houston. Based on their research, the students created artistic, literary, digital, film and music projects to commemorate these largely unrecognized migrations, which have made Houston one of the most demographically and culturally diverse cities in the U.S.

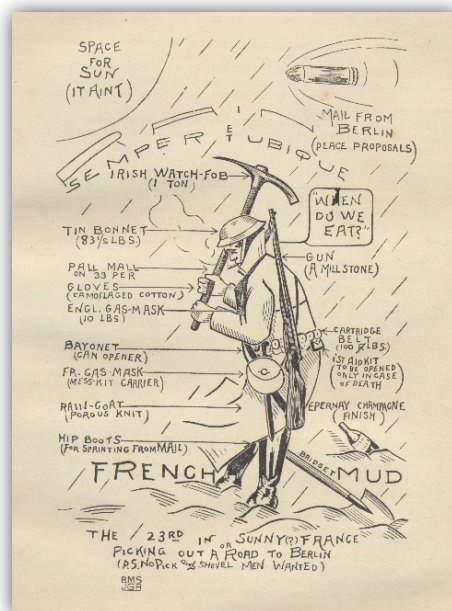
***Food and Family* (September 2017 – January 2018)**

Houston's diversity has also made it a food mecca. *Food and Family* explored the world of ethnic cuisine, ranging from home kitchens to family-based farms, multi-generational restaurants, grocers and distributors. Focusing on New Year's commemorations based in Houston but originating in Thailand, India, Judaic traditions and the American South, the exhibit reflected on the aesthetic and symbolic roles of food in the home and in family religious practice. Combining artifacts, historic and contemporary photographs as well as audio and video installation, the show also included a series of public programs. HAA's Folklife + Civic Engagement program and THS teamed up to produce this colorful, multidimensional tribute to Houston's diversity.



***A View from the Trenches: The Oberwetter World War I Photo Collection* (March – April 2018, in collaboration with FotoFest 2018)**

Buildings in ruins, bridges blown to pieces, roads destroyed and men in uniform slogging through a landscape of shattered trees and mud. These are the memorable images brought home to Houston by a Texan fighting in France during World War I. As a soldier with the 23rd Engineers, Austin Oberwetter used his diary and his camera to preserve his experiences, the faces of his fellow soldiers and the unimaginable conditions they endured a century ago.



***Houston in the Civil War* (May – August 2018)**

A multi-media exploration of Houston's underappreciated role in the Civil War, this exhibit touched on urban slavery, the lives of Union prisoners, the murder of a top Confederate general in the middle of downtown Houston, and the daring exploits of blockade-runners along the Gulf Coast. The exhibition's narrative concluded with the Union occupation and the announcement of emancipation we celebrate today as Juneteenth. Among the highlights of the show was a never-before exhibited collection of Civil War artifacts

pulled from the waters of Buffalo Bayou. The artifacts, which included musket balls and cannon rounds, received new life with modern conservation treatments and research by experts in munitions.

Emma Richardson Cherry Studio at the Nichols-Rice-Cherry House

One of the most elegant historic homes in Sam Houston Park was saved from demolition by Emma Richardson Cherry in 1899. Originally built in 1850, the Nichols-Rice-Cherry House is interpreted to that period, with the exception of one room, which has been transformed into Mrs. Cherry's studio, showcasing a selection of her paintings together with art supplies, sketches and photographs. Mrs. Cherry, an art instructor as well as a practicing artist, saw a need for art education in the Houston community and helped found the Houston Public School Art League in 1900. Renamed the Houston Art League in 1912, the organization began developing plans for an art museum. Those plans came to fruition in 1924 with the opening of the Museum of Fine Arts.



Duncan General Store

In 1983, The Heritage Society was given the remaining original contents of the Duncan General Store, one of the last extant 19th century general stores in Texas. Green Cameron Duncan, a cattleman and farmer who settled in Wharton County after the Civil War, opened the store in Egypt, Texas in the 1870's, where it operated until the mid-20th century, selling everything from food to coffins. A meat market was added shortly after it opened, along with a lumberyard and saddlery. In 1900, one corner of the store became the local Post Office.



Hundreds of artifacts from the store are on display in a re-created storefront in the Museum Gallery. The store serves as a learning space for school tours with several "touchable antique" items,

and a 1911 Model T parked nearby adds to the period ambience.

Heritage Society exhibitions are made possible in part by a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and our corporate partners: Cameron Management, EOG Resources, St. Arnold Brewing Co., Chevron, Shell, ExxonMobil, Houston First Corporation, Brookfield, Central Bank, Centerpoint, BB&T Bank, and Title Houston Holdings. Additional funding was provided by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.

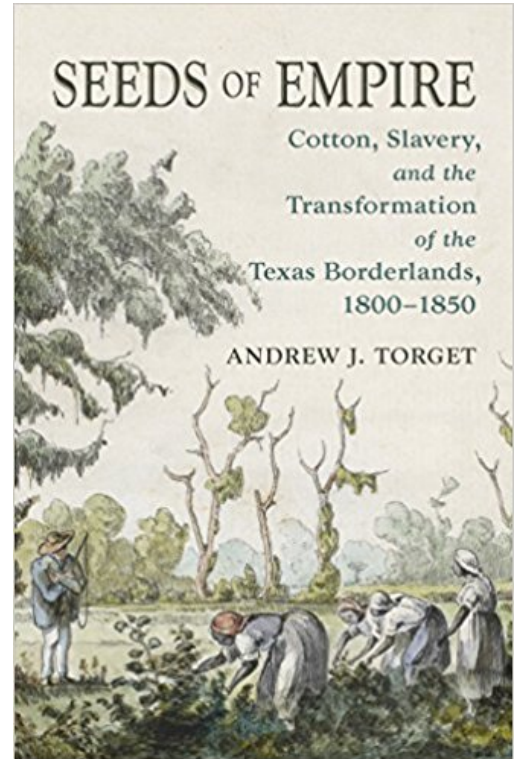
NOONTIME LECTURE SERIES

Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850 by Andrew J. Torget (August 17, 2017)

Andrew Torget shared the remarkable story of the cotton revolution of the early nineteenth century that transformed what was originally northeastern Mexico into the western edge of the United States, and how the rise and spectacular collapse of the Republic of Texas as a nation built on cotton and slavery served as a blueprint for the Confederacy of the 1860s.

By the late 1810s, a global revolution in cotton had remade the U.S.-Mexico border, bringing wealth and waves of Americans to the Gulf Coast while also devastating the lives and villages of Mexicans in Texas. In response, Mexico threw open its northern territories to American farmers in hopes that cotton could bring prosperity to the region.

Thousands of Anglo-Americans poured into Texas, but their insistence that slavery accompany them sparked pitched battles across Mexico. An extraordinary alliance of Anglos and Mexicans in Texas came together to defend slavery against abolitionists in the Mexican government, beginning a series of fights that culminated in the Texas Revolution. In the aftermath, Anglo-Americans rebuilt the Texas borderlands into the most unlikely creation: the first fully committed slaveholders' republic in North America.



In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, 'THS' monthly noon lecture series was temporarily suspended, resuming its regular schedule the following spring. Despite the abbreviated season, the lecture series has a loyal following, and continues to grow in popularity and variety.



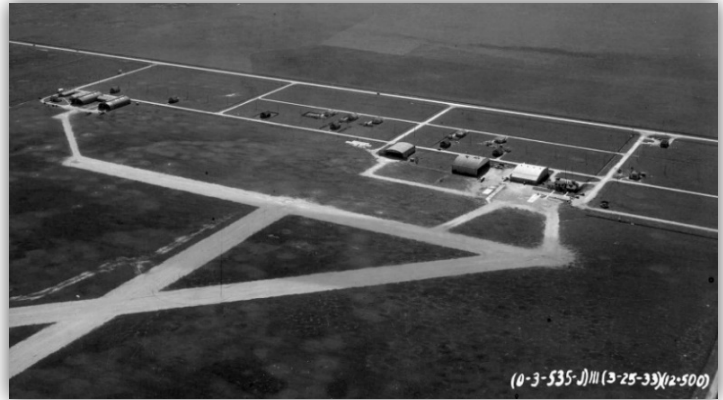
Rare Images from the Houston Chronicle Archives by J. R. Gonzales (March 15, 2018)

The spring series began with a standing-room only crowd on hand to see J.R. Gonzales of the Houston Chronicle's Bayou City History column share historic photos from the newspaper's archives and the little-known stories behind them. A few lucky audience members won Houston history books for identifying locales shown in the rarely seen images.

Houston's Airport Turns 90 by Michael Bludworth (April 19, 2018)

Aviation historian Michael Bludworth brought the early days of Houston aviation to life in his lecture on the history of Hobby Airport. Incensed by being passed over for an Air Mail route, by Dallas of all places, the Houston business community came together to produce a facility that could accommodate the mail. They succeeded on the anniversary of Texas Independence Day in 1928 when Houston saw the arrival of the Air Mail Service and the formal opening of Houston Airport. Bludworth's lecture featured

amazing photos of airport construction and the fantastic flying machines that plied Bayou City skies. The city officially took it over in 1937, and it is still in operation 90 years later.



Convict Cowboys by Mitchel P. Roth (May 17, 2018)

The Huntsville Prison Rodeo, the nation's first prison rodeo, ran from 1931 to 1986. Over the years, the rodeo arena not only boasted death-defying entertainment that would make professional cowboys think twice, but also featured a virtual who's who of American popular culture, including Western film stars ranging from Tom Mix to John Wayne, and music legends such as Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson. Through extensive archival research, Roth introduces the convict cowboys in the rodeo arena and behind prison walls, giving voice

to a legion of previously forgotten inmate cowboys who risked life and limb for a few dollars and the applause of free-world crowds. Author and Sam Houston State University professor Mitchel P. Roth sketched a portrait of the Texas Prison Rodeo against a backdrop of Texas history, covering the history of rodeo, the prison system, and convict leasing, as well as important figures in Texas penology and the changing prison demimonde.

SEE INTERESTING PLACES

The Heritage Society's Fall 2017 See Interesting Places (SIP) series began in October at a legendary home in the heart of River Oaks. This 1931 Colonial designed by architect Preston Bolton was just another lovely home until its second owner added an elaborate music room in 1968. Murder and revenge soon followed, earning the house lasting notoriety as the setting for the true crime classic, *Blood and Money*.



November's tour featured a '20s Houston landmark, the National Cash Register Building, which has been preserved and transformed into a live/work showcase by its current owners. The rooftop patio provided a picturesque setting for drinks and hors d'oeuvres as guests mingled and enjoyed twilight views of the downtown skyline.

The Spring SIP Series began at Limb Design in the First Ward, where a 19th century grocery store has been repurposed as a one-of-a-kind office space for the owners' graphic design firm. The extensive preservation effort had to contend with some unusual obstacles, including the discovery of a large underground cistern.





from Galveston who ultimately perished in the Great Storm of 1900.

The series ended with a visit to a Milam Street mansion that was home to the legendary Judge Roy Hofheinz, best known as the creator of the quintessential Houston landmark, the Astrodome. Judge Hofheinz, whose taste in interior décor was famously uninhibited, installed wall-to-wall Astroturf throughout the second floor and had bars installed in nearly every room of the house.

In April, SIP visited two adjoining turn-of-the-century homes in Old Sixth Ward. The original owner of the Steamboat House, a prominent jeweler, had the wraparound porch built to resemble a steamboat to remind his wife of her childhood on the Mississippi with her father, a steamboat captain.

According to neighborhood lore, pioneer aviator Amelia Earhart regularly visited the home when her uncle lived there in the early decades of the 20th century. It shares a backyard with an ell-wing Folk Victorian cottage that was built in 1893 by a widow



HISTORICAL DOCUMENTARIES & ONLINE VIDEO

The HAM Slices of History program continues to flourish at The Heritage Society. We have now completed and released 48 Slices, all between 90 seconds and five minutes in length and covering the widest possible array of Houston area history topics. They are available free of charge on our YouTube channel and most are in regular rotation on KUHT and HISD-TV. That puts the HAM Slices of History into 2.4 million regional households.

The five titles released in FY 2017-2018 cover a range of subjects. The 1928 Democratic Convention marked Houston's first time on the national stage thanks to a six-figure check written to the party by business leader Jesse Jones. The Bayou City's vaunted mid-century modern architecture is highlighted in one slice, as is Houston's little-known role in the Civil War. Ninfa Lorenzo, the woman who first popularized the tacos al carbon and fajitas that





have become menu staples across America, is the subject of HAM Slice 47. The most recent Slice tackles the history of public transportation that dates to mule-drawn streetcars in the 1870s, through decades of electric streetcars that were abandoned for today's bus system and a notably smaller version of electric trains again.

PRESERVATION

The year took an unexpected turn in late August with the arrival of Hurricane Harvey. The **1868 Pillot House** received the most damage with approximately 9 inches of flood water entering the building. The **1868 San Felipe Cottage** sustained damage to the a/c system and water in the ducts below the building. Other buildings – including St. John Church, the Nichols-Rice-Cherry House, the Long Row, and the Museum Gallery – suffered new or worsened roof leaks.

Staff worked diligently after the storm to assist a remediation company with drying the Pillot House and the temporary dehumidification of San Felipe Cottage. The Pillot House's original floors survived the floodwaters, and the interior drywall was unharmed. All electrical receptacles in the Pillot House were replaced, and the San Felipe Cottage HVAC system was repaired and the duct system cleaned and sanitized. Later in the year, the Pillot House front door was removed for repair, and replacement of the Pillot House's non-historic porch floor was imminent.



Work to stabilize the foundation of the **1847 Kellum-Noble House** continued through 2017. A second round of plaster repair was completed on the interior, and the alarm system was repaired and upgraded. New alarm devices installed on the second floor will allow for the removal of the heavy iron gate that currently provides security for the second floor. Planning continued for the exterior phase, which had to be re-bid after Hurricane Harvey. Increased construction costs resulted in a funding gap that THS hopes to fill by pursuing state historic preservation tax credits. Work on the first phase of the exterior restoration will begin this fall.

Routine maintenance on the historic buildings continued through the 2017/2018 program year, including HVAC repairs, and maintenance, carpentry and roof repairs, pest management, and other minor repairs.

COLLECTIONS

For most of the past fiscal year, the Collection Department was primarily concerned with recovery from Hurricane Harvey. As a result, only a very limited number of acquisitions were made to THS's collection, guided by our recently adopted Collecting Plan. Additional steps are being taken to refine the collections in accordance with the plan. Among these steps are the transfer or auction of some artifacts damaged in the hurricane and deemed redundant or inappropriate to the new directive, and the conservation of historically significant artifacts. The Heritage Society's Registrar supervised six volunteer interns during 2017/2018 to assist in the Collections recovery and processing.

Notable Acquisitions

Panoramic Photograph of soldiers at Camp Logan, including Captain Mattes, who was killed in the riot of 1917

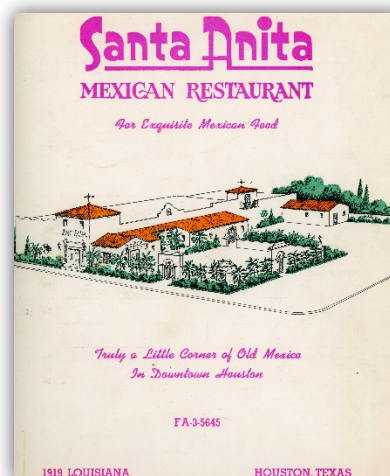


Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railroad Bond, October 8, 1857



A private collection gathered by Barry Moore and his father, Harvin Moore, a co-founder of The Heritage Society. It contains several 19th and 20th century souvenirs, advertisements, and collectable pieces from Houston events or locations.

A grouping of 22 original menus from Houston-area restaurants from the mid-20th century collected and saved by the donor, and eight menus from other Texas cities, including Galveston.



CONSERVATION



Sam Houston Portrait. Before and after conservation



Timothy Jarvis Brewster. Before and after conservation.

TOURS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The Heritage Society operates ten historic buildings in Sam Houston Park that are available for in-depth, docent-guided tours. The buildings tell the stories of Houston's past, from the settlers who received land grants from Stephen F. Austin to the Gulf Coast oil boom of the early 20th century.

These historic buildings give young people an opportunity to take an active role in learning about Texas history. Students start their tours with a video about pioneer life in Texas, then visit the Duncan General Store and Old Place, where they are challenged to find items that were featured in the video. The children then visit the 1891 St. John Church, where they explore rural life, the role of immigration and the cultural and religious practices immigrants brought with them that have influenced Texas to this day. The last stop on their tour is the 1905 Staiti House, where they can compare and contrast 19th century pioneer life with early 20th century lifestyles.

On average, nearly 1,700 students and their chaperones participate in free or reduced-price tours each year. Large school groups often come on multiple days, and in addition to historic building tours, participate in other educational activities such as scavenger hunts in the park or pioneer trunk shows. Student tours are tailored to their grade level and focus of study.

Among the school groups touring The Heritage Society in 2017/2018 were Kinkaid School (11th grade), Deer Park Junior High (8th grade), Classical Conversations Home School Co-op (various grade levels), Lake Katy Co-op Light (various grade levels), New Heights Christian Academy (6th and 7th grades), St. John Lower School (3rd & 4th grades), Ehrhart School (7th & 8th grades), First Baptist Academy (3rd grade), Children's Courtyard Summer Program (K-5th grades), Kids R Us New Territory (ages 5 – 12), A Creative Genius Learning Academy Summer Program (K-5th grades), Caring Aggies and several Boy and Girl Scout troops.

In all, some 1,000 students, chaperones and parents participated in free or reduced-price tours. Many of our school group field trip tours come over a two or three day period, due to the large number of attendees. Additional activities offered during school group tours are scavenger hunts, pioneer trunk shows, and specialty tours. After Harvey, many school groups who were on the calendar for field trips had to cancel to make up for lost class time.

Because adults visit The Heritage Society for a variety of reasons, group tours are customized to their particular interests. Many of the 700 adults who participated in group tours during the year were tourists seeking information about Houston's cultural heritage.



Local groups seeking language and cultural training or a continuing education experience during 2017/2018 included TIRR-The Challenge Program, Beta Sigma Phi Women's Organization and university students. A large contingent of University of Houston college history students visited the Civil War exhibit that opened in May 2018. At least 200 visitors were Geocache participants, Segway tour and bicycle visitors, who visit the park for a specific reason, and often return on their own to learn more about Houston's history.

Sam Houston Park is a popular cultural venue for senior outings; many of these groups use Harris County's free precinct buses and include THS on their day trips. Among the groups that visited THS in 2017-2018 were AARP, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Rotarians from Taiwan, Bridgeland Garden Club, Houston Heights Women's Club, JOY (Just Older Youth), Big Stone Lodge, Humble First Baptist Church Senior Group and several other church groups.

Free bi-lingual cell phone audio tours are also available. Visitors who are pressed for time or visit the park when the tour office is closed can use their phones to hear a brief commentary on each building. During 2017/2018, nearly 4,000 people took the opportunity to learn about Houston's history via cell phone.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Another way THS serves children in the Greater Houston community is through its traveling pioneer history trunk shows, staffed by THS volunteers in period costume who demonstrate spinning wheels and other domestic implements that were common fixtures in pioneer households. During the Waterworks Festival on May 11, 2018 at Discovery Green, Connie Elliott was an exhibitor for The Heritage Society. Connie showed children how the availability of water has progressed since the pioneer days. Connie was able to reach more than 2,000 children, teachers, parents, and chaperones from the greater Houston area. This free outdoor festival buses students in from schools across the city.



THS staff members also presented outreach programs on the history of Houston and Texas to some 725 adults in the community. The presentations took place at two dozen locations throughout the Houston area, including All Saints Long Life Learning, West University Community Center (4 presentations), Harrisburg Rotary, Texas German Society, Lake Olympia Garden Club, Texas State Historical Association, San Felipe de Austin, and CyFair ISD Teacher Learning Center.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS

The Heritage Society provides annual continuing education for middle school teachers through *The Best Little Workshop in Texas*. In the most recent session, held on June 12, 2017, there were 26 participants from 14 local school districts. Collectively, these teachers reach more than 3,100 students each year, creating a significant educational impact throughout the Greater Houston area.

During the daylong program, Dr. Armando Alonzo, professor of history at Texas A&M, gave a presentation on Spanish Texas, covering the establishment of missions, towns and ranches in Tejas and the transition to the independent nation of Mexico, the merger of Coahuila and Texas and the politics of slavery. Dr. James Kearney, professor of Germanic Studies at UT, discussed 19th century European immigration to Texas, exploring the cultural and social forces at play on both sides of the Atlantic and the many contributions that European immigrants have made to the rich and colorful tapestry of the state. Dr. Merline Pitre, professor of history at Texas Southern University and author of several books on African-American history, discussed the history of the Civil Rights movement in 20th century Texas.



Since its inception in 2007, more than 500 teachers have attended the workshop, which is presented in collaboration with Houston Public Library and sponsored by Humanities Texas. In 2017, THS was pleased to receive Continuing Education Unit accreditation for the workshop from the Texas Education Agency.

EVENTS

EVENING OF HERITAGE

On March 21, 2018, more than 75 guests gathered at Brennan's of Houston to hear Speakers Stephen Fox and Alex Brennan-Martin recount the history of the storied building at 3300 Smith Street. Fox spoke about the design of the building and Brennan-Martin took up the story after Hurricane Ike caused a tragic fire.



The former Junior League Building, which now houses Brennan's Houston, dates back to 1929. Noted architect John Staub designed the building based on the 1795 Spanish Creole Rilleux House in New Orleans' French Quarter. A 1929 issue of the magazine *Houston Gargoyle* described the building as "a home of friendly charm, a place of Southern hospitality, a thought of old New Orleans in this bustling city of sudden, hazardous growth."

After the fire, rebuilding began immediately, and Brennan's Houston reopened in February 2010. Though the interior of the building had to be gutted and refurbished, the most iconic building elements were maintained. Ninety percent of the exterior façade was preserved, and some of the original design elements from the 1929 building were rediscovered. Praised by restaurant critics and customers alike, the new design also won awards from the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance.

Brennan's elegant buffet included their signature turtle Soup and other Creole favorites. Evening sponsors included the John P. McGovern Foundation, Presenting Sponsor; BB&T; John and Evelyn Boatwright; Joanne Zumbrun; Cathy and Dougal Cameron and Cameron Management.

HOUSTON HISTORY LUNCHEON

The historic Bayou Club again provided the perfect setting for our Houston Heritage Luncheon on May 10. Hosted by Co-Chairs Nita Vandiver Jackson and Catherine Campbell Brock, the luncheon and silent auction benefitted the work of The Heritage Society.



A sold-out crowd of guests gathered to hear Speaker Joe Holley recount little-known tales of Houston's past. A native Texan and former staff writer at *The Washington Post*, Holley is an editorial writer and "Native Texan" columnist for the *Houston Chronicle*. He received degrees from the University of Texas and Columbia University and is a former editor of the *Texas Observer* and a regular contributor to *Texas Monthly*. In 2017, Holley was a Pulitzer Prize finalist for a series of editorials on guns and gun culture in Texas.



Sponsors included the J.P. McGovern Foundation, Presenting Sponsor; Janice McNair, Gold Sponsor; Minnette and Peter Boesel, Jo and Jim Furr, Catherine Brock, Nita Jackson, Evelyn Boatwright, Frank Vandiver, and Joanne Zumbrun, Bronze Sponsor.





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