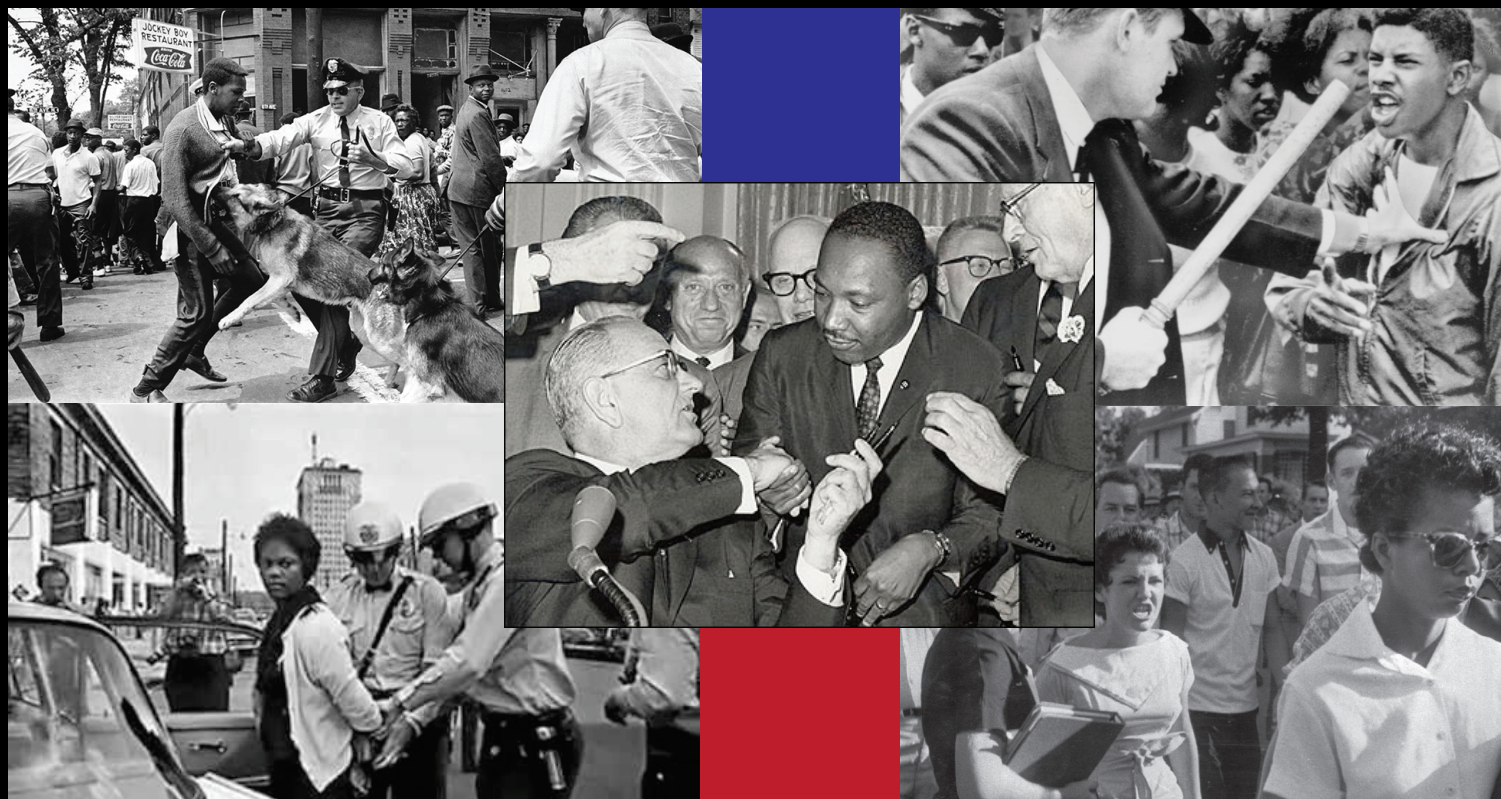


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Editorial Forward

From Which We Came

Dr. Lason Mackey-Hines

In 1933, Carter Godwin Woodson stated, *The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History is projected on the fact that there is nothing in the past of the Negro more shameful than what is found in the past of other races. The Negro is as human as the other members of the family of mankind. The Negro, like others, has been up at times; and at times he has been down. With the domestication of animals, the discovery of iron, the development of stringed instruments, the advancement in fine art, and the inauguration of trial by jury to his credit, the Negro stands just as high as others in contributing to the progress of the world.*

As we embark on the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the 25th anniversary of Mickey Leland's plane crash, and remember last year's 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington, we are still today fighting the same battles of yesterday. The words of knowledge expressed eighty-one years ago in Woodson's book still chimes through the cities, states, and communities of today.

Woodson could not have said it any better, as the Negro (or African American today) is as human as any other human of mankind. The articles written in this edition of the Journal of History and Culture provide a historical knowledge of educational contributions and significant learning of vocational trades, preservation and establishments, struggles, progression, and communication relating to the African American, the same population of humans who have had struggles as have other members of mankind, but have also made great contributions to Texas and the United States.

In the 30s when Woodson wrote his book, there were approximately sixty African American Architects registered in the United States. African Americans have been involved in the building and architecture of this world for years. In 1867, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) formed the first recognized architecture

program, and one year later, Samuel C. Armstrong joined the Freedmen's Bureau and established Hampton Institute to train African-Americans, including many former slaves and Native Americans, and this prototype of teaching opened the doors for the formation of Tuskegee Institute where educating minority groups in various disciplines continued to grow.

Today, when we look at the education of architecture, Prairie View A&M University, School of Architecture, ranks number one in producing architecture undergraduates. The Negro (African Americans) race continues to contribute to society as do the other members of mankind. As we continue to learn from which we came, we also must remember we are all apart of mankind with many skills, abilities, and knowledge to help preserve our history and culture, as well as make living today a better place for all.

Marginalized Modernisms: Progressive Architecture for Minority, Immigrant, and Rural Churches in Texas

Jason John Paul Haskins

Abstract

Marginalization threatens the conservation of post-war churches built by minority, immigrant, and rural communities. Their congregations face economic limitations, social changes, and insufficient resources to maintain their facilities. Many are undocumented and uncelebrated when they fall outside canonical definitions of Modernism, prevailing taste, and mainstream conceptions of historical significance. This paper will explore the social contexts of the development of modern churches for diverse religious identities to aid in their identification and evaluation.

A Prelude: The Progressive Architecture of John Chase.

When John Saunders Chase, Jr. submitted his graduate thesis in 1952, he was the first architect to systematically apply the thorough analytical functionalism of modern architecture to the specific “doctrines and programs of the Negro Baptist church.”¹ In his conception of a program to satisfy the requirements of local autonomy of the Baptist churches, his thesis considered an exhaustive array of practical concerns: lines of sight, acoustics, proximity of various functions, lighting, ventilation and air conditioning, technology, and the distribution of church school facilities.

The hypothetical plan that concluded Chase's thesis recommended the specialization of spaces to address the increasing "concern for the social and economic condition of their people"² during what we now recognize as the development toward the African-American Civil Rights Movement. His goal was "a church that was noble in character and one that produced an atmosphere conducive to self-expression, this designer proceeded to solve the problem by designing a church that offered its congregation a definite release from the restraint, strain and restrictions of their daily grind."³

Unable to find work as the first African-American architect licensed to practice in the state of Texas, he built his own practice by sharing his thesis with church leaders throughout Texas and building on the importance of the church networks. Acknowledging the church as the "most dominant factor" in the lives of African-American communities,⁴ he sought to accommodate an expanded program. In this, his work represented the forefront of trends in church architecture globally⁵. His approach also addressed concerns that dominate church planning across many denominations today as churches strive to become—or sometimes recover what is felt as a lost role as—a viable "third place." Church leadership now seek to design specialized "inclusively sociable places" based on the inherent potential of the church to be "both the basis of community and the celebration of it."⁶

Elements of the program and design features outlined in the thesis carried into John Chase's professional work, such as the Education Building for the historic St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Houston, a 1950 yellow brick classical revival building. Chase's 1963 addition featured a square chapel with a pyramidal roof



Figure 1. John S. Chase, St. John Missionary Baptist Church (Dowling Street) Education Building and Malone Chapel, Houston, 1963. Photo by the author.

topped by a futurist sculptural spire and a two-story classroom wing with full-height glazed wall system on the southeast face.

David Chapel in East Austin solved the issues identified in his thesis through different forms. Rather than using a horizontal composition to address the sight line problems in a typical pulpit-choir-baptistery arrangement, Chase used a vertical focal wall to ensure each component was visible and given the appropriate weight. The “open word of God” stood front and center immediately accessible to the congregation while the baptistery provided an elevated focal point and denominational marker.⁷ Limited by

available land, single-loaded classroom wings flanked the main sanctuary instead of exterior courtyards. David Chapel also featured a developed narthex, identified as

lacking in most contemporary buildings, and a large community room separated from the sanctuary in part by a movable partition. An open brick and metal cruciform frame tower, frameless beveled corner glazing, and glazed walls with solid colored planes—a feature common in African-American Baptist churches, but here in a de



Figure 3. John S. Chase, David Chapel, Austin, 1959. Photo by the author.



Figure 2. John S. Chase, David Chapel, Austin, 1969. Photo by the author.

Stijl-inspired tessellation—contributed to the progressive language of the design.

John Chase was not the first to propose the suitability of Modern architecture to African-American denominations. For example, Trinity United Methodist Church,

Houston built a modern sanctuary designed by George Pierce and Able Pierce in 1951 with *dalle de verre* windows derived from Afro-American quilting traditions.⁸ But Chase clearly articulated the reasons a congregation who is in some way marginalized—minority congregations, immigrant communities, or churches in rural towns—might have chosen to “get away from traditional styles and incorporate modern materials to produce an economical building, expressive of its purpose.”⁹



Figure 4. George Pierce and Able Pierce ,Trinity United Methodist Church, Houston, 1951. Photo by Ross Wienert.

PART I

Marginalized Modern Churches in Texas

Modern religious architecture and marginalized sub-cultural heritage demand reading modernism from a hermeneutic of continuity¹⁰ that simultaneously encompasses revolution and tradition. While there is no consensus on a comprehensive definition of the Modern Movement, most use a language of rupture to describe themes of “social and aesthetic innovation, using state-of-the-art technology and rejecting values of continuity and tradition”¹¹ or the “notion that artistic works must look forward to the future without overt references to historical precedent.”¹²

However, even the earliest historiography of self-conscious Modernism constructed deterministic narratives to lend historical justification to the radical.¹³ Reactions to the limitations of rejecting history from the Modern Movement’s greatest proponents arose well before the Post-modern discourse.¹⁴ Recent scholarship further underscores the limitations of narrow definitions of the canonical Modern Movement by recognizing the influence of vernacular architectures¹⁵ or national historic aesthetic and material traditions¹⁶ in multiple identities.¹⁷

Rhetoric of addressing the new challenges of the modern world arose within the Christian churches as well; however, its newness included that of ancient liturgical practices and rediscovery of orthodoxy. It was a *retour aux sources* that emphasized the essential principles of worship expressed in “noble simplicity.”¹⁸ Practitioners argued that new Christian architecture should then follow on the basis of

liturgical principles.¹⁹ The traditions they rejected were accretions of excess. While material or ritual languages of abstraction highlight newness and change, it was not a rupture but a non-linear continuity via appeals to lost traditions.

Jean Labatut, influential Director of Graduate Studies at Princeton (1928-1967), developed a new pedagogy of modern architecture rooted in historical precedent and embracing popular culture.²⁰ His own designs for modern churches sought what he called ‘Eucharistic architecture’: timelessness and direct experience as third way realizing both abstract spirituality and figural corporality characteristic of the “Mystical Body of Christ.”²¹

Related inquiries into worship forms occurred in all denominations—and increasingly between denominations—as education and social activity increased. For example, John Chase observed an attempt to “improve” the worship services in Baptist churches “due mostly to the increasing volume of well-trained and educated members.”²² Chase participated in a hybrid “progressive architecture” that valued a tradition of innovation, heritage, and advancement.²³

Minority or diaspora communities who adopted progressive or international styles did so in the context of both assimilation and expression of a unique identity.²⁴ Conflicting motives resulted in complexly intertwined architectures that were hybrids of international and regional, universal and specific, and new and traditional that sometimes fall outside the realm of mainstream Modernism.²⁵

Modern Architecture in Texas.

Modern architecture in Texas grew out of the synthesis of international sources with a strong vernacular heritage. Design influences from outside the state arrived through the accessibility of travel, the proliferation of illustrated publications, architects who trained in the offices of prominent designers or studied at premier institutions before practicing in Texas, and the attraction of the state's growing cities to architects like Philip Johnson. Also pivotal were the Texas Rangers—a group of 1950s University of Texas professors including Colin Rowe²⁶ and John Hejduk—whose curriculum built on modern principles but with the inclusion of theoretical critiques of historical constructions.²⁷ One manifestation of this synthesis was Robert Mather, who studied under Mies at IIT, worked for Gropius and partners in Cambridge, traveled from Asia to Europe, and practiced in Stockholm before moving to Austin to design St. Martin's Evangelical Church in 1958.²⁸ The design of St. Martin's incorporates elements of modern German architecture with primitive ecclesiastic forms.²⁹

The vernacular component of Texas modern architecture derived from immigrant builders adapting their known building traditions into simple forms tuned to the specific climate and landscape of the land. In 1968, Clovis Heimsath—himself a designer of churches in Texas—published a documentation of pioneer Texas buildings to showcase their timeless geometric principles resonant with some of the abstract aspects of contemporary architecture. In its forward, Louis Kahn described the Architect “admiring the work of the unschooled men,” built of materials “true to

their nature with clarity and economy” and “sensing in their work their integrity and psychological validity.”³⁰

Vernacular Churches and Their Influence.

In order to appreciate the context and continuity of marginalized modernisms, we need to consider buildings that might not fall into mainstream delineations of stylistic Modernism. One relevant body of structures comprises churches founded by freedmen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, whose basic forms contribute to a special type within Heimsath’s vocabulary of pioneer geometry. Such churches are routinely considered eligible for designation under criteria related to historical significance. Rarely listed for their architectural significance, many are abandoned or in need of rehabilitation to continue in their function. As a recent example, the Texas Historical Commission approved a historical marker for Brewington Baptist Church in Houston County in January 2014.³¹ A local organization used a crowd-funding website to raise funds for the marker and the restoration of the church.

The current restoration of Capote Baptist Church in Guadalupe County has revealed the work of highly skilled craftspeople. The Wilson family and other freedmen settlers transformed the skills acquired during slavery into a prosperous pottery business and are now recognized as the first African-American Entrepreneurs in Texas.³² The apparently simple church exterior belies tectonic sophistication: a hierarchical and efficient application of hand-forged nails and the use of a material particularly suited to local soil conditions known as “limecrete” that was developed in Seguin in the 1850s from the same clay used in the Wilson Pottery. Everett Fly, a

landscape architect involved with the restoration, describes the footings as “specifically shaped according to their particular locations, interior, corner and perimeter. It’s obvious that African-American knowledge of local construction materials and techniques has been underestimated.”³³



Figure 5. Capote Baptist Church, Guadalupe County, 1874. Photo by the author.

The preservation project began as part of the efforts of the Wilson Pottery Foundation, descendants of the founding family of Capote. Following decades of decline for rural towns, this effort represents a growing trend of “family members returning to restore and revitalize the towns they remembered as children.”³⁴ The initiative of the Wilson family and the use of crowd-funding or microloans suggests a bottom-up model of historic preservation and architectural conservation suited to the communities who value these buildings.

The Little Chapel in the Woods on the campus of the College of Industrial Arts (now Texas Women's University) demonstrates the confluence of vernacular and modern architecture in the work of influential Texas architect O'Neil Ford. Ford and Arch Swank designed the building to be built with unskilled labor from the National Youth Administration as well as students and faculty of the college.³⁵ Amidst the common building methods typical of depression-era public works projects, they based the structure and spatial definition on massive parabolic arches—a union of



Figure 6. O'Neil Ford and Arch Swank, Little Chapel in the Woods, Denton, 1938–39. Photo by the author.



Figure 7. O'Neil Ford and Arch Swank, Little Chapel in the Woods, Denton, 1938–39. Photo by the author.

mathematical precision and abstracted naturalism celebrated by early modern architects.³⁶ Two graduate students contributed furnishings and stained glass windows that are now a prime example of the work of women in New Deal art and design.

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), another Denton church designed by O'Neil Ford, also displays an explicit union of conventional geometry and progressive architecture.³⁷ Ford worked with Félix Candela³⁸ on the distinctive thin shell concrete roof structure. Unlike the typical monolithic saddle roof application of the form, here Candela applied a hyperbolic paraboloid roof to the traditional bayed structure of the Christian basilica within the simple profile of the "Texas basic." As a result, a dynamic undulation occurs within the profile of the humble simplicity of the vernacular country church.



Figure 8. O'Neil Ford, First Christian Church, Denton, 1958–59. Photo by the author.



Figure 9. O'Neil Ford, First Christian Church, Denton, 1958–59. Photo by the author.

Complexity of Intent.

The two churches by O'Neil Ford question a clear delineation between “modern” and “traditional” architecture and support an inclusive hermeneutic of continuity. In addition to expanding conceptions of modernism to place specific structures in the continuity of church-building and account for cultural differences, we must carefully consider the complexity of their intent—both from the perspective of the architects and the clients who decided to build in an explicitly progressive manner. Given the many hands involved with planning a church, their intents and interpretations may be contested or even contradictory.

The intents of the architects, objectives of the pastors, and aspirations of the congregations need to be carefully documented with an awareness of the danger of over-simplifying causality. A modern architecture could accommodate the particular needs of a local congregation's expanded programs through functionalism and structural efficiency. It had the ability to embody constrained costs and extravagant expressions,³⁹ international influence and local culture, the aesthetic of an individual designer and an artistic heritage, and innovation and tradition.

A Preliminary Survey.

As a preliminary survey of marginalized modern churches, many overlooked and undocumented, the following selection of buildings represents a range of criteria and types to aid ongoing identification efforts.

Black Baptist churches, following the influence of John Chase and other first generation professional minority architects, increasingly built modern churches. Other examples in Austin include the Olivet Baptist Church and the 1966 building for the oldest black Baptist church in the city, First Baptist Church.⁴⁰



Figure 10. John S. Chase, Olivet Baptist Church, Austin, 1961. Photo by author.

There are also examples among other African-American denominations or designated congregations within other denominations. Saint Philip's Episcopal Church, San Antonio, a brick tent-form church built in 1963, was the first permanent home of a congregation founded in 1895 as the first church for African Americans in the Diocese of West Texas.⁴¹



Figure 11. St. Philip Episcopal, San Antonio, 1963. Photo by author.

Lawrence A. Collins, African-American architect and professor at Prairie View A&M University, designed a similar church for Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ in Houston in 1971. The abandoned Beaux-Arts modern Sixth Church of Christ, Scientist, opposite Houston's Emancipation Park in an area under development pressures, sold to developers in March 2014.



Figure 12. Sixth Church of Christ, Scientist, Houston, 1941. Photo by the author.

Given the disproportionately small number of professional minority architects, influential pastors like Reverend L. L. Campbell of Austin⁴² and minority contractors like James M. Thomas of Houston⁴³ contributed to the designs of churches.

Congregations who did hire professional architects had to look outside their immediate communities. Milton Ryan, best known for his Modernist residential architecture in San Antonio's Terrell Hills neighborhood, designed the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Victoria.⁴⁴



**Figure 13. Milton G. Ryan, First Church of Christ, Scientist, Victoria, 1953.
Photo by the author.**



**Figure 14. Milton G. Ryan, First Church of Christ, Scientist, Victoria, 1953.
Photo by the author.**

Roman Catholic Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Plum contracted Maurice J. Sullivan, who had been the city architect for Houston and AIA chapter president, to design their new church in 1945. Parishioners quarried the stone for this abstracted basilica themselves.⁴⁵



Figure 15. Maurice J. Sullivan, Saints Peter and Paul, Plum, 1945. Photo by the author.

Austin architects Fehr and Granger, who later won a Progressive Architecture award for the terminal at Austin's Mueller Airport, designed the octagonal Central Baptist Church in Luling. Here too the congregation provided the bulk of the construction labor. "The entire project was 'poorboyed' to achieve the most building cubage for the least expenditure of dollars and cents."⁴⁶ Education wings lit by industrial windows featured classrooms arrayed around open plan assembly areas. The octagonal sanctuary combined developments of the auditorium church with

interest in geometric plans while referring to archetypal forms of Christian baptisteries and martyria appropriate to the defining doctrine of the Baptist church.



Figure 16. Arthur Fehr and Charles Granger, Central Baptist Church, Luling, 1940. Photo by the author.

Hiring professional architects while donating labor and materials was evidence of the value these communities placed on design even when cost was a limiting factor. A 1946 special issue of *Architectural Record* on churches devoted a section to the problem of building costs that noted “‘archeological’ types certainly are not economical to build. ... By borrowing liberally from industrial construction, many economies will result without sacrifice in beauty or dignity.”⁴⁷

In addition to buildings that expressed those economies of industrial construction, some designers chose to employ industrial material and techniques in the application of 20th century movements to traditional. The brick and glass block

towers of St. John Missionary Baptist Church (Gray Street) designed by James M. Thomas represent an abstraction of the Gothic Revival through economic materials. More consciously modern examples include the 1958 Art Deco Gothic St. Joseph Catholic Church in Baytown⁴⁸ and the former Trinidad Lutheran Church (Mexican) under consideration for landmark status by the City of San Antonio.⁴⁹



Figure 17. James M. Thomas, St. John Missionary Baptist Church (Gray Street), Houston, 1946. Photo by the author.

Many Roman Catholic Churches built for Latino parishes exhibit modern variations on mission revival architecture, particularly in the Dioceses of Corpus Christi, Victoria, and Brownsville. San Antonio architect Harvey P. Smith led the work to document and restore the San Antonio missions during the depression.⁵⁰ In 1960, he designed St. Patrick Catholic Church in Bloomington, Texas as a variation on the Southwestern mission with modern fenestration, white stucco, and a parabolic entry.



Figure 18. Harvey P. Smith, St. Patrick, Bloomington, 1960. Photo by the author.

The hierarchical denominations provided support beyond the local congregation, more formal architectural heritage, and greater connection to global developments in ecclesiastic architecture. They also had recourse to architect members of the denomination, as in two churches in the Diocese of Austin designed by Leo Danze: the expansion of the African-American parish of Holy Cross in East Austin (1979)⁵¹ and St. John the Evangelist in San Marcos (1970) for a parish with a significant Hispanic population.⁵²



Figure 19. Leo Danze, Holy Cross, Austin, 1979. Photo by the author.



Figure 20. Leo Danze, St. John the Evangelist, San Marcos, 1970. Photo by the author.

Further Catholic examples illustrate the importance of structural innovation. St. Paul in Mission, Texas, with its shallow thin-shell concrete barrel vault over saw-

tooth perimeter walls with masonry unit *brise soleil*, or St. Anthony in Columbus, with its expressed economical portal frame and industrial free-standing campanile, reflect the influence of international church design in modest applications.



Figure 21. St. Paul, Mission, 1960. Photo by the author.

The buildings designed by Caudill, Rowlett & Scott for St. Joseph's Academy in Brownsville—day lit classrooms, a glulam gym reminiscent of MIT's Kresge Auditorium, and a structurally expressive chapel—provided the firm's innovative concepts for educational spaces and structures to a school staffed by refugee priests and brothers who fled violent persecutions in Mexico.⁵³

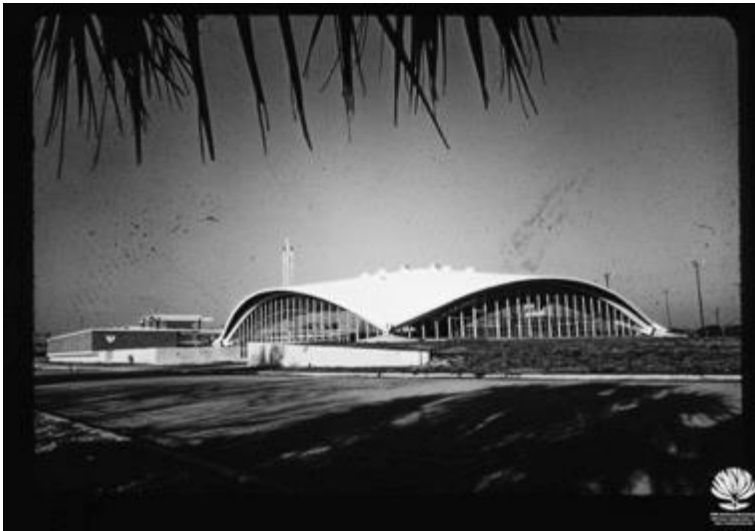


Figure 22. Caudill Rowlett and Scott, St. Joseph Academy Gymnasium, Brownsville, 1959. CRS Center Archives, College of Architecture, Texas A&M University.



Figure 23. Caudill Rowlett and Scott, St. Joseph Academy Chapel, Brownsville, 1959. Photo by the author.

In the 1960, space age thin shell concrete structures flourished in the Coast Bend region, in part because they were “resistive to the area’s corrosive humidity.”⁵⁴ An article touting the revolution in a 1963 Texas Architect included Parkway Baptist Church, the Minor Seminary in Corpus Christi and a Knights of Columbus Hall in Alice.



Figure 24. Wayne, Gibson & Martin, Minor Seminary, Corpus Christi. Photo by the author.

These models of identification provide a framework for churches to appreciate the significance of their own buildings based on the context of their development. The evaluation of these related buildings across ethnocultural and denominational distinctions needs to consider both global trends and particular circumstances in architecture and religion.

PART II

The Conservation of Marginalized Modern Churches

As an increasing body of post-World War II religious buildings reaches the half-century threshold, relocations and changing needs of congregations lead to reassessment of their utility and significance. Modern Texas churches vacated by their congregations and recently lost to demolition include Central Presbyterian Church in Houston, designed by Astrodome architects Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson in 1960–1962 and demolished in 2010, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Dallas, designed by Koetter & Tharp in 1961. The Texas Society of Architects honored the distinguished design of Trinity Lutheran in 1961.⁵⁵ Before its demolition in 2013, the building's owner and the city Office of Cultural Affairs managed to save the historically significant stained glass by Mexican-born artist Octavio Medellín.⁵⁶

These are examples of churches in relatively affluent urban or suburban neighborhoods. The even greater challenges for a disadvantaged congregation maintaining or preserving a modern building arise from the mutually reinforcing difficulties of conserving the recent past, the characteristics of modern architecture, disregard for or ignorance of minority cultural heritage, and the tensions of modern churches.

Conservation of the Recent Past.

Urban renewal and infrastructure projects following World War II contributed to the displacement of low-income residents and the destruction of historical sites. As a response, the National Historic Preservation Act (1966) led to a uniquely American

market-driven system of interrelated federal, state, and local legislation wherein public organizations work in partnership with experts, property owners and the private sector.⁵⁷ Increases in advocates and funding brought preservation out of a narrow, elite definition of historical significance and provided increased opportunity for local, recent⁵⁸, and ethnoculturally diverse significance.⁵⁹

The familiarity, number, and viability of recent buildings hinder their appreciation while in a liminal state between having fallen out of style but not yet passed through a Darwinian process of selection wherein scarcity establishes value.⁶⁰ By encouraging earlier appreciation of recent but impermanent cultural heritage, communities and specialists can more actively participate in retaining the buildings they determine to be most significant, not just the most circumstantially lucky; however, the processes of redevelopment frequently reveal inequitable balance in favor of economic interests over the local significance of existing structures to displaced residents.

Conservation of Modernism.

When the architecture of the recent past is also Modernist, certain technical challenges and problems of perception enter the equation. Post-war construction booms and new construction techniques and materials introduced the building as commodity. The reduced durability of the resultant structures—which may be less likely to reach the traditional 50-year standard—feeds a rapid pace of re-development and negative emotional responses.⁶¹

The United States chapter of the International Committee for the Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites, and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement (Docomomo US) lists criteria for evaluating Modern sites and includes “technological merit” and “social merit” in addition to “artistic and aesthetic merit.”⁶² The technological marker involves “innovative modern technology to solve structural, programmatic, or aesthetic challenges.” However, innovative techniques and materials require analogous innovations in the techniques for their preservation. Significant but failed experiments in materials later discovered to be toxic add to the complexity of preservation efforts. Significant but failed social experiments, especially in public housing for low-income residents, contributed to negative public perception that hinders preservation of other modern buildings.

Shifting social values and the programs of modern buildings similarly require a shift in the evaluation of architectural and historical significance. In some cases Modernism’s emphasis on expressed functionalism limits reuse for other functions; conversely, adaptive reuse may destroy the structure’s original social significance and the conceptual intent of the author.⁶³

Conservation of Minority Cultural Heritage.

Challenges are compounded for communities without political champions and resources to preserve their heritage. Economic and legal restrictions limited the development of endemic architectures and reduced the number of potentially significant sites. Instead, place-making often occurred through cultural artifacts other than whole buildings. For example, architecture of the Chicano Movement relied

heavily on manipulation of existing surfaces with motifs incorporating pre-Columbian deities and patterns with colonial and revolutionary imagery.⁶⁴

Just as the previously established standards of significance may not apply to modern buildings, they may not represent the values of minority and immigrant communities or non-monumental sites.⁶⁵ Recognizing the need in the case of Latino heritage, the National Park Service commissioned a theme study to help “tell the layered story of American Latinos as an integral part of the history, culture, and politics of the United States.”⁶⁶ Additionally, the specific criteria of “traditional cultural significance” apply to the majority of these sites, especially for active congregations with defined cultural identity when their architecture reflects “association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that are rooted in that community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.”⁶⁷

The dispute in 2013 over the demolition of the Univision Building in San Antonio highlights the challenges of preserving marginalized modern sites. A review by the Texas Historic Commission found that the Univision building was eligible for listing under both ethnic heritage and architectural designations⁶⁸ as the headquarters and studios of the first full-time Spanish-language television station in the United States,⁶⁹ the first to be owned by a Mexican-American,⁷⁰ and the first radio station in San Antonio to air a regular black program.⁷¹ Its architectural significance derived from its innovative design to accommodate state-of-the-art broadcast technology in an emerging building type.



Figure 25. Demolition of the Univision Building, San Antonio. Photo by Stuart Johnson.

Its demolition represented a failure of the preservation process. According to activists fighting for the building's preservation, city officials "expressed the opinion that the building was ugly, ignoring—or perhaps ignorant of—the guidelines used to determine historic significance, guidelines in which aesthetics play no role."⁷² The city disregarded input from preservation experts, community groups, and the state commission in favor of economic development. This case raised the question of what we expect history to look like, whether it is an unrecognized style or it is the history of another culture.

Conservation of Modern Churches.

Ideological differences created tensions for church architecture for both the architect and the church.⁷³ Some self-consciously Modern architects rejected religion

outright; others considered the religious as merely another assembly function. Many in the church questioned the appropriateness of modern architecture for religion, and that persistent question impedes the conservation of modern church buildings.

It is a theme in the conservation of difficult modern architecture generally that the greatest need is “not buildings that die spectacularly but that simply live effectively.”⁷⁴ As needs change, a modern church building can become a burden on a congregation. The first step in saving the building is supporting its inhabitants. Although there are examples of secularized reuse, “a church, even of cathedral status, without a ministry to people quickly loses its reason for being.”⁷⁵

Bethlehem Baptist Church.

Given the international development of modern architecture, conservation precedents of architectures that influenced local designs suggest approaches to their conservation.⁷⁶ A recent effort to restore and list the Rudolf M. Schindler-designed Bethlehem Baptist Church as an Historic-Cultural Monument exemplifies the challenges and opportunities of conserving marginalized modern religious architecture.

One African-American Baptist church in Los Angeles has been recognized by the city as a significant part of the history of Mid-century California Modernism. Bethlehem Baptist Church, completed in 1945, was the work of one of the seminal figures in the movement. Schindler was most well known as a residential architect before World War II and for working for clients, as a 2001 LA MoCA exhibition put

it, “with more taste than money.” Bethlehem Baptist was his only realized church building and exemplifies his investigations into achieving ‘space architecture’ through economical construction. Most notably, it was unique among the work of that early group of California Modernists as “the lone example of Modernist architecture to cross Los Angeles economic and racial boundaries in the era of Jim Crow housing covenants.”⁷⁷

The congregation had planned to build after the end of World War II, and African-American architect James Homer Garrott prepared a relatively modest Mission Revival design for the church. But when a devastating fire in 1943 forced them to build during the war when costs were “sky-high,” they hired R. M. Schindler to design a modern building. The transition from African-American Garrott to Austrian-American Schindler was swift and delicate.⁷⁸ While cost appears to have been a factor, according to Reverend C.J. Hall, the pastor at the time, “some of the congregation had the idea that the church should reach toward the future as well as the past. ... It took people a while to get used to it. Now they’ve lost all sense of it being different. In time the community will forget completely that it breaks from tradition.”⁷⁹

“Although at first glance the building doesn’t look a bit like a church, the superstructure is cruciform, the mood, if not devout in any conventional old-world sense, is serious and purposeful. Most compelling features of the design is the breaking with clichés in order to utilize a limited area sensibly.”⁸⁰ The main sanctuary consisted of an L-shaped room with seating in each arm and the platform for the

baptistery and pulpit in the corner. The pulpit's placement gave an illuminated centrality and immediate accessibility to the Word of God.⁸¹ The cruciform tower rose from the opposite inside corner with the front doors below its skylights.

Schindler, like Chase, recognized the prominence of the social role of the church in African-American culture and religion. Accommodating an expanded range of functions, both planned and incidental, led to the non-typical design. Schindler compared his design to the "usual church" where "the congregation arrives, finds pews and sits until the service is over. Then they stand on the public sidewalk in front of the church to chat. There is no freedom of movement. People are incidental to the church. But in the Bethlehem Baptist Church people are needed to complete the picture. ... Only modern architecture takes into account this social aspect of the church."⁸²



Figure 26. Rudolph Schindler, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Los Angeles, 1941, photo taken May 2012, prior to restoration. Photo by Robert Mace.



Figure 27. Rudolph Schindler, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Los Angeles, 1941, photo taken Easter 2014, after restoration. Photo by Robert Mace.

The city Cultural Heritage Board first assessed the building in 1972. The Cultural Heritage Committee of the AIA opined, “since the building was constructed under a very low budget, it was not one of R.M. Schindler’s best works.”⁸³ This assessment disregards both the significance of broadening the accessibility of Modernism and a defining characteristic of Schindler’s architecture. In 2009, the city declared the church to be a Historic-Cultural Monument. At the time it was

abandoned and deteriorating. But the building is now home to a new congregation, Faith Build International, who reopened the restored church for Easter 2014.⁸⁴

Conclusions.

Many of the churches identified, and many more underrepresented in the current preservation system, would benefit from similar support in the recognition and restoration of their buildings. Religious buildings are often fundamental properties in the history of marginalized communities because the church was one of the few organizations autonomously operated by slave, segregated, or otherwise repressed communities.

Policy changes that increase recognition of diverse traditional cultural properties and support sites that seem insignificant to those not directly involved in their inhabitation would aid in this effort.⁸⁵ Continued education on the values encoded in modern religious architecture will provide context to evaluate significance. At the local level, the historic centrality of religious congregations to many marginalized communities suggests alternative approaches to conservation: partnerships between churches, interdenominational co-location, space-sharing arrangements between churches and compatible non-profit service providers,⁸⁶ crowd-sourcing and microloans, and other grassroots techniques. With any approach, increased stakeholder involvement will be paramount.⁸⁷ For an active congregation, the first step in saving the church building must be supporting the living culture, ministry, and faith of its inhabitants.

End Notes

¹ John S Chase, "Progressive Architecture for the Negro Baptist Church" (M.Arch Thesis, University of Texas, 1952), iii.

² Chase, "Progressive Architecture," 15.

³ Chase, "Progressive Architecture," 82.

⁴ Chase, "Progressive Architecture," 15-16.

⁵ In this regard, Chase expanded with specificity on the trends identified in George D Butler, "Church Planning for Recreation," AIA Bulletin, vol 2., no. 3, May 1948 34–35; and foreshadowed some of the ideas later put forth in J G Davies, *The Secular Use of Church Buildings* (New York: Seabury Press, 1968).

⁶ Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place*, 14.

⁷ Chase, "Progressive Architecture," Plate 1-A

⁸ "Stained Glass Windows," *Tritnity United Methodist Church* website, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://www.tumchouston.org/118839>

⁹ Chase, "Progressive Architecture," 83.

¹⁰ The language of a "hermeneutic of continuity" borrows from Pope Benedict XVI's Christmas Address to the Roman Curia, December 22, 2005, where it refers to the interpretation of the Second Vatican Council documents as reform or "renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church" which "increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same." http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_en.html

¹¹ Hubert-Jan Henket, "Back from Utopia: The Challenge of the Modern Movement," *Back from Utopia: The Challenge of the Modern Movement*, ed. Hubert-Jan Henket & Hilde Heynen (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2002), 9.

¹² "How to evaluate modern buildings and sites," Docomomo US, accessed February 8, 2014, http://www.docomomo-us.org/register/how_to_evaluate

¹³ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936) and Emil Kaufmann, *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier: Ursprung und Entwicklung der autonomen Architektur* (Vienna: Verlag, 1933). In *Space, Time and Architecture*, Sigfried Gideon went further to proclaim the importance of "constituent facts" over "transient facts" in forming a new tradition.

¹⁴ Sibyl Moholy-Nagy's *Native Genius in Anonymous Architecture* (1957), Aldo van Eyk's inclusion of pueblos alongside Greek classical temples and abstract modernism in his *Otterlo Circles* (1959), and the 1964 MOMA exhibit 'Architecture without Architects.'

¹⁵ Kevin D. Murphy, "The Vernacular Moment: Eleanor Raymond, Walter Gropius, and New England Modernism between the Wars," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 70, no. 3, September 2011, 308-329.

¹⁶ Enrique X. de Anda Alanís, "The Preservation of Historic Architecture and the Beliefs of the Modern Movement in Mexico: 1914–1963," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 6, no. 2, Winter 2009, 58-73.

¹⁷ Vladimir Kulic, Timothy Parker, and Monica Penick, ed. *Sanctioning Modernism: Architecture and the Making of Postwar identities* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).

¹⁸ The constitutions of the Second Vatican Council codified the church's response to modern movements, especially in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)* and the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*.

¹⁹ Among the voices calling for an architecture based on primitive or ancient liturgical practice were Rudolf Schwarz in *Vom Bau der Kirche* (1938), published in English as *The Church Incarnate: The Sacred Function of Church Architecture* (1958), and Peter Hammond in *Liturgy and Architecture* (1960).

²⁰ Jorge Otero-Pailos, *Architecture's Historical Turn: Phenomenology and the Rise of the Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

²¹ Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, November 20, 1947, in *Papal Archives of the Holy See*.

²² Chase, "Progressive Architecture," 35.

²³ While touting the benefits of progressive architecture, Chase dedicated half of his thesis to the history and disposition of the African-American churches and the community principles that led to the expanded social activities of the churches. These in turn provided the environment in which the Civil Rights Movement developed.

²⁴ The same tensions existed in emerging nations after World War II—i.e., Brazil, Israel, Pakistan, Czechoslovakia—who also borrowed the international language of modern architecture as part of efforts to construct or redefine a national identity.

²⁵ Jean-Louis Cohen, "International Rhetoric, Local Response" and Geert Bakaert, "'Modern Classicism' or The Critical Function of Regionalism" in *Back from Utopia: The Challenge of the Modern Movement*, ed. Hubert-Jan Henket & Hilde Heynen (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2002).

²⁶ Rowe explored the resonance of modernism and earlier architectures via post-mortem analysis in essays like "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa," first published in *Architectural Review* in 1947.

²⁷ Alexander Caragonne, *The Texas Rangers: Notes from the Architectural Underground* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

²⁸ Richard Swallow (1987). *Robert George Mather: In Memoriam 1921-1984*. MATHR Box 1. Robert G. Mather Papers. The Alexander Architectural Archive. The University of Texas Libraries. The University of Texas at Austin.

²⁹ Jason John Paul Haskins, "Saint Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church: Modernity and Continuity," *Docomomo US Blog*, February 2, 2012, http://docomomo-us.org/news/saint_martin%E2%80%99s_evangelical_church_modernity_and_continuity

³⁰ Louis Kahn, foreword to *Pioneer Texas Buildings: A Geometry Lesson*, by Clovis Heimsath (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

³¹ "Historical Marker Application Approved for Augusta's Brewington Baptist Church," *Houston County Courier*, vol. 125, no. 14, February 16, 2014, A1.

³² "History," *Wilson Pottery Foundation*, accessed September 11, 2013, <http://wilsonpotteryfoundation.org/founders.html>

³³ Everett Fly, "Capote Baptist Church Sustainable Construction-1," *Everett L. Fly*, May 18, 2013, accessed September 11, 2013, <http://www.everettfly.com/capote-baptist-church-sustainable-construction-1/>.

³⁴ Ellen Hunt, email to author, May 30, 2013.

³⁵ Mary Carolyn Hollers George, "LITTLE CHAPEL IN THE WOODS," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, June 15, 2010, accessed June 19, 2014, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ccleb>

³⁶ For example, they are prominent in Antoni Gaudí's structural experiments for Church of Colònia Güell and the Sagrada Família.

³⁷ Hugh Ayer, "Architecture," *First Christian Church Website*, accessed November 16, 2013, <http://www.fccdenton.com/about-us/8-2/>

³⁸ Dianne Susan Duffner Laurence, "A Symbiotic Relationship Between Mid-Century Modern Masters: The Collaborative Works of Arthur and Marie Berger, Landscape Architects, and O'Neil Ford, Architect," (Thesis, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2007), 61.

³⁹ St Basil Catholic Church on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles entered the history of the Chicano Movement as it became the target of protests as a symbol of excess "that graphically illustrates the misapplication of funds which should be devoted to the poor and to social justice." Dan L Thrapp, "Catholic Group Stages Fast in Church Protest," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 4, 1970, B3. The Brutalist design itself became part of the content of the protests. Oscar Zeta Acosta described it as "McIntyre's personal monstrosity ... a harsh structure for puritanical worship, a simple solid excess of concrete, white marble and black steel. It is a tall building with a golden cross and jagged cuts of purple stained glass thirty feet in the air, where bleeding Christ bears down on the people of America below."

⁴⁰ Clyde McQueen, *Black Churches in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 64.

⁴¹ "Saint Philip's Episcopal Church," *Texas Historic Sites Atlas*, Texas Historical Commission, accessed June 20, 2014, http://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/viewform.asp?atlas_num=5029011749

⁴² John S Chase, "Progressive Architecture for the Negro Baptist Church" (M.Arch Thesis, University of Texas, 1952), 33.

⁴³ St. John Missionary Baptist Church Historical Marker, Texas Historical Commission.

⁴⁴ Joseph Edwin Blanton, *The Organ in Church Design* (Albany, Texas: Venture Press, 1957), 105-110.

⁴⁵ Katie Kulhanek, "The History of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Plum," *Fayette County History*, accessed May 15, 2014, <http://www.fayettecountyhistory.org/plum.htm>

⁴⁶ "'Poorboyed' Baptist Church," *Architectural Record* 100, No. 4, (October 1946), 107.

⁴⁷ Paul C. Ruth, "Modern Church and Building Costs," *Architectural Record* 100, no. 4, (October 1946), 106.

⁴⁸ "St. Joseph Catholic Church," *Houston Deco: Modernistic Architecture of the Texas Coast*, Preservation Houston, accessed June 21, 2014, <http://www.houstondeco.org/1950s/stjoseph.html>

⁴⁹ City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation, Westside Proposed Landmarks Phase II, 2013, https://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/Docs/Westside_Phase_II.pdf

⁵⁰ "Harvey P. Smith: An Inventory of his Drawings and Field Notes, 1929-1957," The Alexander Architectural Archive. The University of Texas Libraries. The University of Texas at Austin. <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00024/aaa-00024.html>

⁵¹ Roxanne J. Evans, "BLACK CATHOLICS," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, September 19, 2010, accessed June 21, 2014. <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/icb03>; "Dedication Program," November 25, 1979. Austin Files, Austin History Center. Austin, TX.

⁵² "Dedication Souvenir Booklet," 11. San Marcos-Hays County Collection, San Marcos Public Library.

⁵³ Brother Martin Thomas, F.M.S., "Chapter VI - Brief Histories of Marist Communities: The South" *The Historical Growth and Development of the Marist Brothers in the United States*, revised October 29, 2010. Marist Heritage Project, Archives and Special Collections, James A. Cannavino Library, Marist College, <http://library.marist.edu/archives/writtenHistory/chapterVI/theSouthCh6.htm>

⁵⁴ "The Coastal Bend Revolution," *Texas Architect*, December 1963, 4-16.

⁵⁵ "Texas Architecture 1961: Honored for distinguished design," *Texas Architect*, January 1962, 14-15.

⁵⁶ "Before they raze Trinity Lutheran Church on Gaston to make way for Y, city to rescue 'significant' stained glass windows," *DallasNews City Hall Blog*, August 19, 2013, <http://cityhallblog.dallasnews.com/2013/08/before-they-raze-trinity-lutheran-church-on-gaston-to-make-way-for-y-city-to-rescue-significant-stained-glass-windows.html/>. For more on Octavio Medellín, see the Octavio Medellín: Works of Art and Artistic Processes, Bywaters Special Collections, held at Southern Methodist University (<http://digitalcollections.smu.edu/all/cul/med/>); and Stephanie Lewthwaite, "Modernism in the Borderlands: The Life and Art of Octavio Medellín," *Pacific Historical Review* 81, no. 3 (August 2012), pp. 337-370.

⁵⁷ Robert E. Stipe, "Historic Preservation: The Process and Actors," in *American Mosaic: Preserving a Nation's Heritage*, ed. Robert E. Stipe and Antoinette J. Lee (Washington, D.C.: US/ICOMOS, 1987).

⁵⁸ Explicitly considered under Criterion G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Last Fifty Years. Marcella Sherfy and W. Ray Luce, *National Register Bulletin 22: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of The Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1979, revised 1998).

⁵⁹ Robert E. Stipe, "Discovering Old Cultures in the New World: The Role of Ethnicity," in *American Mosaic: Preserving a Nation's Heritage*, ed. Robert E. Stipe and Antoinette J. Lee (Washington, D.C.: US/ICOMOS, 1987).

⁶⁰ For further discussion of these characteristics, see Andrew Saint, "Philosophical Principles of Modern Conservation," in *Modern Matters: Principles and Practice in Conserving Recent Architecture*, ed. Susan MacDonald (Shaftesbury: Donhead, 1996), 15–28.

⁶¹ Deborah Edge Abele and Grady Gammage, Jr., "The Shifting Signposts of Significance," *Preserving the Recent Past 2*, ed. Deborah Slaton and William G. Foulks. (Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, 2000), 2-7-2-11.

⁶² "How to evaluate modern buildings and sites," *Docomomo US*, accessed February 8, 2014, http://www.docomomo-us.org/register/how_to_evaluate

⁶³ Andrew Saint, "Philosophical Principles of Modern Conservation," in *Modern Matters: Principles and Practice in Conserving Recent Architecture*, ed. Susan MacDonald (Shaftesbury: Donhead, 1996), 20–22.

⁶⁴ Martin D. Rosen and James Fisher, "Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: Barrio Logan, City of San Diego, California," *The Public Historian* 23, no. 4, Fall 2001, 99-111; Edgar Garcia, *Chicano Architecture*, accessed June 2, 2014, <http://chicanoarchitecture.wordpress.com/>

⁶⁵ David W. Morgan, Nancy I. M. Morgan and Brenda Barret, "Finding a Place for the Commonplace: Hurricane Katrina, Communities, and Preservation Law," *American Anthropologist* 108, no. 4, December 2006, 706-718.

⁶⁶ Frances Negrón-Muntaner and Virginia Sánchez-Korrol, "Introduction," *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: Theme Study*, National Park Service, 2013, accessed June 21, 2014, http://www.nps.gov/latino/latinothemestudy/pdfs/Panel_Intro_web_final.pdf

⁶⁷ Patricia L. Parker and Thomas F. King, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of The Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1990, revised 1998).

⁶⁸ Mary Tuma, "Inside the Messy Demolition of the Univision Building," *San Antonio Current*, November 20, 2013, accessed June 9, 2014, <http://sacurrent.com/news/inside-the-messy-demolition-of-the-univision-building-1.1588303>.

⁶⁹ Teresa Palomo Acosta, "SPANISH-LANGUAGE TELEVISION," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, June 15, 2010, accessed June 9, 2014, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ecs01>

⁷⁰ Lauren Walser, "Lost: Univision Building Demolished in San Antonio," *PreservationNation Blog*, November 20, 2013, accessed June 9, 2013, <http://blog.preservationnation.org/2013/11/20/lost-univision-building-demolished-in-san-antonio/#.U5Zg9ZRdU63>

⁷¹ "Univision Building Comes Down...Kinda," *The Source*, Texas Public Radio, November 5, 2013.

⁷² "Willful Neglect: San Antonio's Historic Preservation Calamity," *La Voz de Esparanza*, vol. 26, no. 10, December 2013/January 2014, 4–5.

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⁷⁴ Anthony Paletta, "Brutalism's Bullies" *The Awl*, June 11, 2014, accessed June 14, 2104, <http://www.theawl.com/2014/06/brutalisms-bullies>

⁷⁵ Tim Ellis, "The Conservation of Twentieth Century Churches and Cathedrals," *The Conservation of Twentieth Century Historic Buildings*, ed. Peter Burman et al. (York: Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, c1996), 71–75.

⁷⁶ The work of international organizations, such as Docomomo, and resources published by regional authorities, such as English Heritage (such as Susan. Macdonald, ed., and English Heritage, *Preserving Post-War Heritage: The Care and Conservation of Mid-Twentieth Century Architecture* (Shaftesbury: Donhead Publishing, 2001) will largely apply to the conservation of local buildings..

⁷⁷ Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Cultural Heritage Commission, Recommendation Report: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the Bethlehem Baptist Church, Case No. CHC-2009-2113-HCM (Los Angeles, 2009), 2.

⁷⁸ Steve Wallet, "From South Los Angeles to West Hollywood: James Garrott, Rudolph Schindler and the Bethlehem Baptist Church," *Steve Wallet, architect* blog, June 17, 2014, accessed June 19, 2014, <http://www.stevewallet.com/blog/2014/06/17/from-south-los-angeles-to-west-hollywood-james-garrott-rudolph-schindler-and-the-bethlehem-baptist-church-2/>

⁷⁹ Esther McCoy, "Bethlehem Baptist Church Story," 1939, in Esther McCoy papers, circa 1876-1990, bulk 1938-1989. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁸⁰ "Community Church," *Interiors* 104, no. 6, (January 1945), 82.

⁸¹ Julius Schulman's period photograph taken from this perspective illustrates this effect clearly.

⁸² Esther McCoy, "Bethlehem Baptist Church Story," 1939, in Esther McCoy papers, circa 1876-1990, bulk 1938-1989. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁸³ Recommendation Report, 3

⁸⁴ Robert Mace, "An Easter Surprise: The Unexpected Rebirth of Schindler's "Lost Church," Austin Cubed, April 13, 2014, accessed May 20, 2014, <http://austincubed.blogspot.com/2014/04/an-easter-surprise-unexpected-rebirth.html>.

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⁸⁶ "A Visionary Model," *Sacred Places*, Spring 2013, <http://www.sacredplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Vision-Clinic-Spring-2013.pdf>

⁸⁷ Morgan et al., "Finding a Place," 710-711.

Establishment of the New Farmers of America

Dr. John H Fuller, P.E.

Abstract

The backbone of American growth over the past two centuries and its continued future status as an economic and scientific world leader is based on Education. The American Educational System over the past two centuries has been instrumental in the development of world class economic and scientific leaders. The structure of the American Educational System is based on a number of attributing factors, with the two guiding factors being classroom instruction and the development of leadership skills. A look back at the development of leadership skills can again be attributed to a numbers of factors. One factor that had a great influence on young African Americans men was the establishment of the New Farmers of America.

This paper presents information from archives of the NFA, published articles related to NFA activities, presentations and observations of former NFA leaders and past members of the organization. Material as presented examines historical events leading to the establishment of the New Farmers of America (NFA), activities of the organization during its existence and its eventual combining with the Future Farmers of America (FFA) Organization. The story of the NFA is rich in the historical development of outstanding African American leaders and instilling leadership principles in young African Americans.

Introduction

The colonization of America by European Immigrants that started in the seventeenth century, initiated what is known as the American Agriculture Revolution. Farms were established and the raising of livestock and growing of agricultural produce were necessary for survival and economic growth. Teams of oxen, mules and horses were the source of farm power and over the centuries America witnessed the progression from the use of wooden plows to cultivating by metal plow and eye hoe and eventually to highly mechanized farming systems.

Early agricultural farming methods eventually gave way to mechanization, resulting in America becoming recognized as a major source for exported agricultural goods. A major factor leading to the revolutionary trends of the industrial revolution was innovations in agricultural mechanization.

At the turn of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, the major crops in Texas were corn for food consumption and the harvesting of cotton as a profit crop. The production of cotton was a major American produce and led to Texas denoting it as King Cotton. The continued innovations in the cotton industry of ginning and processing were numerous throughout the Agricultural Revolutionary period with rapid changes at the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. During this period, America witnessed the elimination of labor intensive processes and the replacement of animal powered ginning methods. With cotton as a chief profit crop, a great impetus for industrial mechanization and technological improvements in cotton processing was the separation of cotton fibers from their seeds, cleaning the fibers, and baling the lint for shipment to market. In 1884 Robert S. Munger of Mexia revolutionized the slow, animal-powered method of "plantation ginning" by developing a faster automated ginning system. [1]

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, America was heavily invested into the industrialization of its economic resources. The horse and buggy was gradually being replaced by automobiles and the use of animal powered crop planting and cultivating techniques were giving way to steam powered tractors as initially employed at the middle of the nineteenth century and eventually replaced by the internal combustion engine. The first patent for the internal combustion engine was granted in 1886 to a German engine designer and car engineer Karl Friedrich Benz. [2]

With industrialization there was created the availability of good paying industrial jobs, leading to a displacement of young farm workers from the rural farms to industrial jobs in the city. In Texas the City of Houston became a major hub for oil refining and with the end of World War I on November 11, 1918, returning veterans having knowledge of opportunities in industrial America had no will to return to a rural farm life.

The development of industries, primarily in urban areas, stimulated the growth of Texas towns in the late nineteenth century. The number of Texans living in urban centers (towns with a population of more than 4,000) grew from 115,396 in 1880 to 454,926 in 1900, an increase from 7.2 percent to 14.9 percent of the population. [3] As the song written by Joe Young and Sam M. Lewis with music by Walter Donaldson at the beginning of World War I, and published in 1918 relates to life on the farm:

*How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm
After they've seen Paree'
How ya gonna keep 'em away from harm, that's a mystery
They'll never want to see a rake or plow
And who the deuce can parleyvous a cow?*

Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act

On February 22, 1917 the sixty fourth Congress of the United States enacted the Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act of 1917. The purpose of the act as passed by Congress is stated as:

Chap. 11^[4]. – An act to provide for the promotion of vocational education; to provide for the cooperation with the States in the promotion of such education in agriculture and the trades and industries; to provide for cooperation with the States in the preparation of teachers of vocational subjects; and to appropriate money and regulate its expenditure.

The primary purpose of the Smith-Hughes act was to promote vocational education in public schools. It aimed at providing specialized vocational education to students 14 years old and older and training teachers in subjects related to home economics, industry, trade and agriculture. [5] The Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act of 1917 also provided federal funds for vocational agriculture to be taught in public secondary schools.

Before the Smith Hughes Act, agricultural education in Texas was already being conducted at the high school and college levels and through the Texas Agricultural Extension Service to area farmers. Vocational agricultural education with Federal Government support was introduced into twenty-eight white and four black high schools in 1917 under provisions of the federal Smith-Hughes Bill.

Prior to the passing of the Smith Hughes Act, Texas was already providing vocational training at the secondary school level. In 1907, the Texas Legislature

mandated that, with the exception of schools with an academic population of more than 300, all rural schools in the state would be required to offer elementary agriculture classes. Beginning in 1909, teacher training in agriculture was mandated at designated Texas colleges. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 provided funds that were to be matched by the states to pay the salaries of agriculture, home economics, and industrial education teachers and to help states prepare teachers in these subjects. Prairie View Normal School for Negroes offered courses in carpentry and agriculture for boys beginning in 1882 and in 1899 added domestic economy for girls. The John T. Ellen School in Austin in 1896 was the first manual training school for white boys. [6]

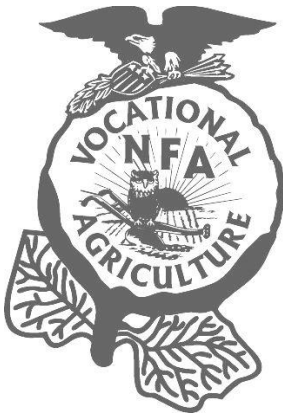
The Smith Hughes Act was the first systematic federal educational system that was aimed at training girls and women in home economics and other vocational skills. It was also the first law (P.L. 64-347; 39 Stat. 929) that authorized federal government oversight of a portion of high school curricula. It was signed into law on February 23, 1917. [6]

Establishment of NFA and FFA

To develop leadership skills and provide for collegiate interaction between schools, most High School Programs foster student organizations such as a Chemistry Club, Biology Club, Drama Club, Glee Club, Debate Club and various other student organizations specific to a particular instructional discipline.

Originally taken from the book “The Widening Path by Oren Arnold, Kiwanis International, 1949”, the first high school student-based organization was chartered at the Sacramento High School in California, in May 1925. The concept of instilling an organized, separate entity separate from the school itself came from Albert Olney, and Frank Vincent. They were school administrators and Kiwanis Club members who were looking to form a junior service club in the school. This organization later became known as the Key Club.

Student based Organizations established in High Schools offering vocational agriculture were the NFA and FFA. The New Farmers of America (NFA) was organized in Virginia in 1927 and became a national organization for African-American young men in 1935. The organization was formed to serve agriculture students in southern states where schools were segregated by law. [7]



The NFA started as a vision of three men: Dr. H. O. Sargent, Federal Agent for Agricultural Education, U.S. Office of Education, George Washington Owens, Teacher Trainer, Virginia State College, and the “Father of NFA”, J.R. Thomas, Teacher Trainer, Virginia State College. The NFA was a localized movement in Virginia around 1927. These sections held conferences and contests unifying the state associations until a national organization was officially created on August 4, 1935. [8]



At the same time the NFA was being established in Virginia, another organization named the Future Farmers of America (FFA) was being established for white students, which was necessary due to the existing dual segregated system that existed at the latter part of the nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth century. A significant milestone of the FFA took place in 1950, when President Harry S. Truman and the 81st Congress granted a Federal Charter by public law 740 to the FFA. With the National Organization being chartered by an Act of Congress, two employees from the U.S. Department of Education were to provide

strategic direction, fulfill legal requirements and oversee policy for the FFA and the National FFA Foundation. [9]

Since the organization of the FFA it has grown in student participation to become the largest youth organization in the United States, with 579,678 members in 7,570 chapters throughout all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. FFA is the largest of the career and technical student organizations in U.S. schools, with an included African American membership of approximately four percent.

With the need to encourage young men to consider agricultural activities as a life's vocation, the NFA sought to provide young men with vocational, social and recreational activities in order to develop their skills in public speaking, leadership and agricultural trades.

Prairie View Interscholastic League

In addition to National, State and Local conferences and meetings, the NFA was also a part of the Prairie View Interscholastic League competition held on the campus of Prairie View A&M University. Part of interscholastic agricultural competition was the identification by observation the top farm animal from a group of animals, such as judging the best beef cattle from a herd of similarly aged beef cattle, judging the best hog from a group of hogs and the judging of a variety of farm animals for best in class based upon a previously studied criteria as presented in the High School Curriculums. The following information on the interscholastic league was taken from the PVIL.

During the latter half of 1920, the University Interscholastic League (UIL), the governing body for the White high schools in Texas, decided to establish a separate Negro division. It was named the Texas Interscholastic League of Colored Schools (TILCS) and held that name until 1964 when it was officially changed to the Prairie View Interscholastic League. However, from the beginning, in the Black community, it was called the "Prairie View Interscholastic League (PVIL) or the "Negro League," because the state track meet was held at Prairie View each spring and all of the documentation on the academic and athletic competitions was housed there. The first state track and field meet was held at Prairie View Normal College in April 1921. [10]

Academic competitions (in debate, typing, literary, band, music, singing, etc.) were held each spring at Prairie View. The state basketball tournament was also held

each February at Prairie View, followed by the state track meet each April. The New Farmers of America (NFA), an organization for high school students that were interested in a career in agriculture, also held their state competitions at Prairie View on a yearly basis.

The operating headquarters for the New Farmers of America program in Texas was at Prairie View A&M University. The NFA state adviser was also stationed at Prairie View, where the staff of the school of agriculture, in cooperation with the state staff in agricultural education, sponsored and planned jointly such activities as the annual state NFA convention and state livestock and poultry judging contests. They also participated in various fairs, shows, contests, and conventions at local, district, state, and national levels. [11]

NFA Leadership

The success of any program or organization is dependent upon the commitment of its membership and the quality of its leaders. To survive from its establishment in 1917 until it's combining with the FFA in 1964 required good organizational structure, recognizable support and dedicated leadership. Details of the organizational structure along with a historical timeline of the NFA can be found in the New Farmers of America Records, 1929-1965, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, IUPUI University Library, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis or online at <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/special/nfa>.

Notable early Texas leaders that contributed to sustaining the purpose of the NFA and its continued growth were

Dr. Ernest Norris, NFA Executive Secretary 1847-1965, Professor of Agriculture Education at Prairie View A&M University

Mr. Paul Rutledge Sr., Area Supervisor, Vocational Agriculture 1939-1962, Teacher of Vocational Agriculture 1931-1937, Principal of Schools 1937-1939

Found in the history of the NFA is the active involvement of notable African American leaders, working with students at local chapters and holding administrative positions at the National level. Notable leaders that served as National Presidents of the NFA with their dates of service are

1946 – 1947	Lawrence Price, Texas
1949 – 1950	Dudley Derousen, Texas
1952 – 1953	Oliver Hunter, Texas
1955 – 1956	Cecil Strickland, Texas
1961 – 1962	William Love, Texas

Merger of the NFA with the FFA

In 1954, the Supreme Court made a monumental decision in the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas court case. The court set aside a Kansas statute permitting cities of more than 15,000 to maintain separate schools for blacks and whites and ruled instead that all segregation in public schools is "inherently unequal" and that all blacks barred from attending public schools with white pupils are denied equal protection of the law as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. [12]

Education is at the top of the list of the most important functions of state and local governments. Existing segregated school systems were inherently unequal and a violation of the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment.

On May 17, 1954, the Court unanimously ruled that "separate but equal" public schools for blacks and whites were unconstitutional. The *Brown* case served as a catalyst for the twentieth century civil rights movement, inspiring education reform everywhere and forming the legal means of challenging segregation in all areas of society. The United States Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) outlawed segregated education and consequently had a tremendous influence on programs of education for African Americans.

As a result of having a number of racially motivated violent incidents across the South and the insistent commitment of the civil rights movement during the spring and summer of 1963, the House Judiciary Committee held a series of hearings on proposed civil rights legislation during the summer of 1963. The House Judiciary Committee approved civil rights legislation on October 26, 1963, and formally reported it to the full House on November 20, 1963, just two days before President Kennedy was assassinated. The House of Representatives passed a final version of

the Civil Rights Act on February 10, 1964. [13] Title IV of the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion or national origin by public elementary and secondary schools and public institutions of higher learning.

With the decree for desegregation the two established agricultural based student organizations officially merged on July 1, 1965 with a ceremony at the National FFA Convention. At this date the New Farmers of America was merged with the Future Farmers of America and the annual state conference of African-American teachers of vocational agriculture was henceforth discontinued.

With the merger, the NFA was required to give up its name, constitution, bylaws, emblems, money and its 52,000 members. The merger required the NFA to transfer all its National assets to the FFA. The transfer was substantial; in the 1964 audit report the NFA had \$10,445.56 in checking, \$32,355.30 in savings, and \$3,800 in stocks and bonds (NFA Archives). The African American teachers and state staff who had previously taught about the NFA were now required to teach pertinent facts about the FFA and arrange for the disposal of all NFA items (Norris, 1993). It was not until the 1990s that any information pertaining to the NFA was included in the Official FFA Manual. [14] [15] [16] [17] [18]

With the merger of the two organizations, the symbol of the NFA with its open boll of cotton with two leaves at the bottom enclosing the letters NFA and symbols would no longer be a significant organizational symbol, but replaced by the FFA symbol with its ear of corn surrounding its initials and symbols.

NFA Creed

I believe in the dignity of farm work and that I shall prosper in proportion as I learn to put knowledge and skill into the occupation of farming.

I believe that the farm boy who learns to produce better crops and better livestock; who learns to improve and beautify his home surroundings will find joy and success in meeting the challenging situations as they arise in his daily living.

I believe that rural organizations should develop their leaders from within; that the boys in the rural communities should look

forward to positions of leadership in the civic, social and public life surrounding them.

I believe that the life of service is the life that counts; that happiness endures to mankind when it comes from having helped lift the burdens of others.

I believe in the practice of co-operation in agriculture; that it will aid in bringing to the man lowest down a wealth of giving as well as receiving.

I believe that each farm boy bears the responsibility for finding and developing his talents to the end that the life of his people may thereby be enriched so that happiness and contentment will come to all.

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Forgotten, But Not Gone: The Symbols of Historic Olivewood Cemetery

Lisa Mouton

Abstract

In cemeteries throughout the country one can find the words “gone but not forgotten” engraved alongside the names of loved ones. But in the case of Olivewood Cemetery it might more appropriately read “forgotten, but not gone.” As the oldest incorporated African American cemetery in the city of Houston, Olivewood has passed through multiple cycles of abandonment and recovery over its 140-year history. Yet the cemetery is still rife with matter of cultural, botanical, and genealogical significance. What these items symbolize is of particular value, as they tell a story of struggle, survival, and triumph that weaves its threads through the historical narrative of Houston’s black community.

Introduction

Houston’s Fifth Ward was known as “The Bloody Fifth” for a reason. Of all the tales of death that happened there over the decades, none is more tragic than what happened to Arthur Taylor in the spring of 1914. Arthur Taylor was appointed as a

Harris County Special Deputy on Saturday afternoon, May 23, 1914. As an African American man, he was needed to go into the black community on the north side of downtown Houston in order “to try to apprehend a black male suspect who was terrorizing the neighborhood with a rifle.”¹ The Houston Police Department had also assigned officers John Richardson, Edmond Cordona, and Detective Isaac “Ike” Parsons to the same case. An Officer Bryson and Officer Lyons were additionally sent to attempt to apprehend the suspect.

On that fateful night in 1914, Detective Parsons, who was “one of the few black officers in the Houston Police Department at that time,” informed the Night Police Chief that he was unable to accompany the other officers on the case and would be going after the suspect alone.² Newly deputized Arthur Taylor was also assigned to patrol the same area alone.

“The Houston Police Department officers were not aware that Deputy Taylor had also been assigned to work in the same area to search for the suspect. Officer Richardson and Cordona rode the Liberty Road trolley out of Houston to the area of Nance and Schwartz Streets. They arrived in the area around midnight and began talking to the people in the neighborhood about the suspect.”³

About half an hour after beginning their inquiries with the local residents, gunshots pierced the darkness. Suspecting that Bryson and Lyons might be in danger,

Richardson and Cordona ran to the area. Detective Parsons and Deputy Taylor, who were patrolling separately, also heard the gunshots and immediately responded.

When Officer Richardson saw a black male running toward him in the darkness, he shined a light and saw the man had a pistol in his hand. The man was Arthur Taylor. Richardson ordered Taylor to put down his weapon, but Deputy Sheriff Taylor refused. Officer Richardson dropped his light and began firing. Taylor was shot twice and died instantly.

Detective Parsons, also hearing the initial gunshots, jumped a drainage ditch and arrived in time to see Deputy Taylor gunned down. He waved his hand as he ran toward his fellow officers, but all Richardson and Cordona saw in the darkness was a black man with a gun. They struck Parsons four times, and he also died at the scene.

“It was not until officers Richardson and Cordona had an opportunity to take a closer look at the two deceased males that they recognized Detective Parsons as one of the dead officers. They did not recognize Deputy Taylor because of his short tenure as a deputy sheriff.”⁴ In this tragic turn of events two men lost their lives due to a case of mistaken identities. Deputy Sheriff Arthur Taylor’s story is especially poignant because he had only been commissioned for a few hours when he was slain

in the performance of his duties. Taylor was survived by his wife Ella. He was only 35-years-old.⁵ Arthur Taylor is buried in an unknown grave in Olivewood Cemetery.

Olivewood as a Symbol of Community

Stories like that of Arthur Taylor depict a more tragic side of life in Houston a century ago. But there are so many other stories that also must be told if one were to paint a more complete picture of the African American community. Olivewood Cemetery helps to tell those stories.

Tucked away in an overlooked area of the city, only those who are looking with intent, or the dreadfully lost, are likely to stumble upon Olivewood Cemetery. It can be found at the end of Court Street, just northwest of downtown Houston, near a bend of the White Oak Bayou. Sometimes designated historically as Hollow Wood or Hollywood,⁶ Olivewood Cemetery was founded in an area bordering the historic First and Sixth Wards, near a stop on the Houston & Texas Central rail line known as Chaney Junction.

The cemetery's struggle for survival over the years parallels the collective struggles of the community who built it, and the individual struggles of those who are buried there. Olivewood is the final resting place of men and women who were

leaders in Houston's nineteenth-century African American society, including ministers, teachers, doctors, dentists, lawyers, and veterans.⁷

But alongside these more prominent Houstonians are hundreds of laborers, domestics, seamstresses, drivers, students, and children, whose more modest achievements have been lost from memory over time. Many of the mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters buried there were the men and women who transitioned Houston's African American community from slavery to freedom, and navigated through life in the Jim Crow-era South. From former slaves to community leaders, Olivewood is proof that all men are made equal in death.

Emancipation was declared for slaves in Texas on June 19, 1865, and Olivewood Cemetery was incorporated a mere 10 years later. The land had been originally designated for slave burials, but it became an established cemetery after Richard Brock, one of Houston's first black aldermen, purchased the land. Although a church never owned the property, Olivewood was known for being a burial site for black Methodists, including Reverend Elias Dibble, the first minister of what is now Trinity United Methodist Church.⁸ Other prominent African Americans who are buried in Olivewood include Wade Hampton Logan, a presiding elder for the Navasota and Marshall Districts of the Methodist Church; Dr. Charles B. Johnson,

who was known as The Singing Dentist and authored Houston's Bicentennial song; and Charles H. Atherton, the first principal of Houston's Colored High School (now known as Booker T. Washington High School).⁹

Like many cemeteries of the nineteenth-century (post-1830), Olivewood was designed for the living as much as it was designed for the deceased. Oftentimes cemeteries were the only accessible green spaces in rapidly growing cities. Thus they were used for Sunday picnics and neighborhood gatherings, although the practice of using cemeteries like parks has generally fallen out of fashion now.¹⁰ But in Olivewood one can still sense that same feeling of community among the historic monuments to an indomitable and diverse group of Houstonians.



Figure 1

The Angel of Olivewood marks the Milton A. Baker grave.
Baker was an early stockholder in Olivewood Cemetery.

Image courtesy of author



Figure 2

“Gone But Not Forgotten”

Image courtesy of Robert Sennhauser

Olivewood as a Symbol of Renewal

Guarded by the vegetation and buildings that almost completely encircle it, there are hundreds who pass Olivewood daily along Interstate 10 without ever realizing it is there. Despite being designated as a historical cemetery in 2005 and being placed on Preservation Texas’ Most Endangered List in 2011, maintenance of

Olivewood continues to be an uphill battle. Nature, vandalism, and urbanization have all taken their toll on this historic site over time and continue to be the biggest threats to the cemetery today.

Olivewood is no longer an active burial site, as the last interment occurred in 1966.¹¹ The subsequent decades of neglect left the cemetery a virtual jungle that numerous committed groups and individuals have tried to combat over the years. Furthermore, since there can no longer be any *new* interments, the manner of funding common to most active cemeteries is not an option for Olivewood, and all caretaking and restoration efforts are completed entirely through the donations of time and resources contributed by volunteers.

Weathering, an abundance of plant life, and trees that fall during large storms and hurricanes are all enemies to the preservation efforts happening at Olivewood. Recent years of drought have also caused the loss of a number of mature trees in the cemetery. Over the years monuments and statuary have been moved or stolen, and the original 1870's grid pattern of the plots is nearly indecipherable.

Erosion is also a major concern. Because of White Oak Bayou on the north end of the cemetery, water rises up and flows into the cemetery. Water also flows off of city streets and from nearby buildings and businesses. It is uncertain exactly how

much disinterment has happened in this process, but archaeologists are working to recover and conserve the remains. Efforts to correct these problems are further complicated by the fact that Olivewood can be difficult to access due to its semi-secluded location.

Almost fifty years ago Olivewood was essentially abandoned because a company purchased the land next to the cemetery and blocked the entrance. For a brief time people tried to continue to carry in the bodies, but without proper ingress and egress, it was too difficult to continue to use the cemetery as an active burial site.

But despite all of these challenges, Olivewood continues to pull through. Every spring there are dozens of lilies, amaryllis, and other flowers that come into full bloom. Some of these flowers are descended from bulbs that were planted to mark graves over a hundred years ago. These flowers, like the community that planted them, have weathered storms of all kinds yet continue to bloom as a symbol of hope and renewal.



Figure 3

Bright flowers in bloom against a dreary landscape.

Image courtesy of author

Olivewood as a Symbol of Ancestral Roots

Olivewood Cemetery is a showpiece for the connection between West African burial traditions and the nineteenth-century black community. Although established in 1875, Olivewood sits on sacred ground that had been used for slave burials long before it was officially incorporated. And even though most of those interred in

Olivewood never set foot in Africa and had whole-heartedly adopted Christianity, many of the customs and traditions their ancestors clung to survived the African Diaspora and were passed down through the ages. It is evident from the symbols in Olivewood that these African ideas and beliefs were clearly assembled in the collective consciousness of those who were burying their dead there by the late nineteenth-century.

According to the Olivewood Cemetery historical marker, “The original 444 family plots, comprising over 5,000 burial spaces were laid out along an elliptical drive. The burial ground contains several hundred marked graves, in addition to an unknown number of unmarked graves.” These unmarked graves are significant. Perhaps they didn’t always lack distinguishment.

One belief common to West African cultural and religious traditions was that of an afterlife in a world of spirits. This spirit world was inverted. It was believed to be underneath the world of the living and we are connected to it by water. Graves were an important tool for communicating with this world of the spirits and burial sites were often marked with the personal belongings of the deceased.¹² This tradition continued in the African American community, but over time many of these grave goods have been misplaced, lost, damaged, or stolen.

Moreover, many of these personal goods were broken or turned upside down from the beginning. Upside down items represented the inversion of the spirit world.¹³ Goods were broken so as to release the spirit such that the object could be of use to its owner in the afterlife. Another symbol common in African American cemeteries is that of water-related objects. Because of the belief that the worlds of the living and the dead were connected by water, objects such as vases, seashells, and pitchers held particular significance.¹⁴ Pipes were also sometimes used as grave markers as a connection with the deceased.

Many of the unmarked graves in Olivewood today may have been marked at some point in one of these ways. Unfortunately, many of these broken objects and other markings were misinterpreted as garbage and disposed of, taking with them a little piece of the African cultural heritage of the community.



Figure 4

Backward writing on the grave of Will A. Harris, 1876-1930.
Backward writing represents the inverted nature of the spirit world.

Image courtesy of Robert Sennhauser



Figure 5
Seashell grave marker
Image courtesy of author

Olivewood as a Symbol of Peace

Just as Olivewood Cemetery has served as a monument to the dedicated lives of those buried there in the past, so will it continue to serve in the future. The vision for Olivewood is to establish it as a pristine and relaxing place set apart, where anyone interested can come to reflect on the past, learn more about those who are

interred there, and enjoy an island of tranquility in the midst of a busy metropolis.

But there is much work left to do before this goal will be accomplished.

Descendants of Olivewood, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Olivewood Cemetery. This organization was awarded guardianship over the cemetery in a landmark case in 2008, and now faces the monumental task of trying to restore the cemetery while preserving its history and physical integrity.

However, thanks to thousands of hours of tireless efforts, volunteers have managed to clear and maintain a large portion of the cemetery. Restoration continues to be an ongoing process.

Descendants of Olivewood founder and co-president Margott Williams has been making plans for the cemetery's future for over ten years:

“I’m hoping that people will realize the value and contributions that the people [buried in Olivewood] have given, not just to the city of Houston but world wide. I’m hoping that the memory of these people will live and continue to inspire everyone to continue to move forward. I hope we won’t forget the people who have gone before us. These people gave back. Why shouldn’t they have a pristine resting place?”¹⁵

Perhaps the name Olivewood itself is the most symbolic of the plans for this cemetery. On the outside, an olive tree may seem ordinary and perhaps a little messy

during certain seasons of the year. But the dense foliage and the knotted and gnarled trunk of an olive tree give it a most unique and interesting appearance. Remarkably, if the trunk of an olive tree is cut, the roots can continue to grow and send up new shoots.

And so it is with Olivewood Cemetery. Despite years of neglect, Olivewood continues to survive. It will continue to tell the unique and interesting stories of Houston's past for generations yet to come. And just as the olive branch has long been a symbol of peace to the world, there is reason to hope that Olivewood Cemetery will continue as a source of peace and inspiration for years to come.

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Survival in the Midst of Chaos and Devastation: Texas and the Great Depression

Dr. Ronald Goodwin

Abstract

When Franklin D. Roosevelt arrived in Washington DC as the 32nd President of the US, the economy was in shambles and the American people were desperate for answers. Roosevelt tried to deliver that answer when he confidently asserted that Americans had “nothing to fear but fear itself.” Even though the New Deal established policies that eased the hardships caused by double-digit unemployment with relief programs, it was the Roosevelt’s vaunted Brain Trust that changed the paradigm of American society by introducing patrician-styled government policies. In Texas, those politicians who supported New Deal liberalism successfully funneled millions of dollars into the state’s relief programs and influenced national politics into the 1960s. As a result, Texans were able to survive the Depression based on the strength of local politicians in Roosevelt’s administration. Texans saw the New Deal as a threat to their local autonomy and eventually an opposition

group appeared that challenged Roosevelt's influence in Texas. The Constitutional Democrats embodied the agrarian ideology of the Jefferson but had little influence in Texas during the 1936 elections.

During the 1930s, the Reverend James Valentine, a black clergyman from San Antonio, worked with the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) community services program. Classified as a "white collar" worker, Valentine worked in one of the city's adult education programs. One day, Valentine regretfully resigned from his New Deal-sponsored job to accept the pastorate of a black congregation in Athens, Texas.

In his resignation letter, Valentine thanked the WPA and the adult education program for providing him the employment necessary to keep his home and put his daughter through college. "Greatest of all," Valentine stated, "it (working with the WPA) gave me a chance to pursue my course of study and further prepare myself for the position as Pastor of one of our leading churches. I leave with regret, but shall ever do all I can do to further Adult Education and lift up my people."¹

Another black clergyman, also from San Antonio, the Reverend Shelly Edward Steward, Sr, was also influenced by the WPA. Steward migrated to San Antonio with his wife and five young children from the rural farm community of Gonzales, Texas, in the late 1920s. For them, San Antonio in the 1920s was “the big city.” Nonetheless, like so many other black families throughout the country, they came to the city with hopes of a better life away from the racism and hopelessness of tenet farming. Within a few years the family increased by two more children, and once the Depression started life was anything but encouraging.

In 1934, Steward started a new church, Shiloh Missionary Baptist, in San Antonio’s black community and soon became an important figure among the city’s black clergy. Always seeking to convert lives to Christ, he would often go to the many WPA work sites, particularly the site that became the San Antonio Independent School District’s Alamo Stadium. Many of those he encountered at these work sites accepted Christ for the first time and became loyal members of his congregation.²

Valentine and Steward were examples of the thousands of lives impacted by the WPA and the New Deal. Texans throughout the state struggled to survive

the economic and social chaos and devastation caused by Depression. However, many Texans did not understand that the state's wellbeing rested in the hands of a few skilled political statesmen in President Franklin Roosevelt's administration and not its burgeoning oil industry. These Texas politicians insured the state received millions of dollars in federal funds, and together they influenced national politics for the next several decades. Beginning with John Nance "Cactus Jack" Garner's failed bid for the White House in 1932, Texans like Sam Rayburn and Jesse Jones influenced national politics that culminated with Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society in the 1960s.³

Nonetheless, the Depression had an effect on nearly every facet of life in Texas. Politically, state leadership dealt with adjusting to increased federal control, even though federal monies were available to defer the costs of private relief efforts. Socially, the Depression forced many Texans from their homes as the numbers of unemployed and homeless rose tragically. Economically, Texans fared better than many other parts of the country because of the political power of those Texans in Roosevelt's administration.

Still, Texas' honeymoon with Roosevelt and the New Deal did not last forever. Even though the New Deal provided billions of dollars for relief in

Texas, and Texans gladly transferred a majority (70 percent) of its social costs to the federal government, they still expressed their concerns about the role of the new federal – state relationships. Furthermore, Texas Democrats worried that the growth of federal influence and power would eventually lead to a reduction of state power and control over local issues.

The concern over Roosevelt's growing national power ultimately led to the formal creation of a Texas group opposed to the Administration and the New Deal. Led by W.P. Hamblin, John H. Kirby, and Joseph Baily, the Constitutional Democrats came to embody those principals established by the agrarian ideology of the Jeffersonians of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Texas' Constitutional Democrats eventually joined the national opposition to the New Deal and melded into the Jeffersonian Democrats. They tried to influence the 1936 presidential campaign by insisting the New Deal "was fast leading the US to chaos."⁴ However, they exerted little real influence in 1936 because they appealed primarily to "wealthy elites."

Even though the national political scene exhibited stability and consistency between Roosevelt's charm and Vice President Garner's political acumen, Texas politics was anything but stable. Texas governors Ross Sterling,

James Allred, W. Lee O'Daniel, and Miriam "Ma" Ferguson, controlled Depression-era politics throughout the state. Jesse Jones's Reconstruction Finance Company made \$300 million available to Texas for relief efforts on November 1, 1932, which "Ma" Ferguson used to create the Texas Relief Commission with authority to distribute relief funds throughout the state.

However, the guiding force behind the creation of the Relief Commission was "Ma" Ferguson's husband and political partner, former governor James "Farmer Jim" Ferguson. "Farmer Jim" saw the opportunity to create a "relief machine" by using federal monies to reward supporters and punish Ferguson critics. Texas' first Federal grant of \$808,429 arrived on June 27, 1933.⁵ It was not long, however, before the Texas Relief Commission, and the Ferguson administration itself, came under intense scrutiny when allegations of fiscal mismanagement of federal funds were made.⁶

James Allred succeeded the Ferguson regime and became governor in 1936. Allred was an ardent supporter of Franklin Roosevelt and favored the policies of work relief over the dole appropriations.⁷ As governor, Allred initially gained recognition as a populist liberal who first gained statewide attention for his opposition to the renewed activities of the Ku Klux Klan in Texas. Still, His

first term as governor was spent “tidying up after the Fergusons – revamping the Texas Rangers from hundreds of Ma’s ‘special’ commissions, and creating an independent board to govern pardons and paroles from the prison system.”⁸ Allred was also responsible for introducing Lyndon B. Johnson to Franklin Roosevelt when the President was on a fishing trip in the Gulf of Mexico. Johnson soon became the state director of the WPA’s National Youth Administration and remained a New Dealer for the remainder of his political career.⁹

While Allred supported Roosevelt and the New Deal programs, he was not a “complete New Dealer.” Allred sided with fellow Texan “Cactus Jack” Garner and opposed Franklin Roosevelt during the Supreme Court controversy.¹⁰ Although Texans generally did not like the extent of federal intrusion in state affairs, by August 1937 Allred appropriated millions of federal dollars for Texas’ many relief programs.¹¹

In 1938, W. Lee O’Daniel became governor and continued Allred’s policy of seeking increased federal funding, even if he, too, had reservations. When asked about Roosevelt’s policies and federal funding O’Daniel said “I am not saying that all of Mr. Roosevelt’s plans are sound and right, but as long as he has

the national grab bag open and as long as other states are grabbing, I'm gonna grab all I can for the State of Texas."¹²

Socially, Texans may not have felt the full brunt of the Depression's unemployment and homelessness as in other states, but there was still suffering throughout the state. In 1930, national unemployment was over 25 percent, and the dustbowl sweeping the Plains States devastated regions socially and economically. In Texas, the Depression affected Texas' rural areas more significantly than its urban communities, since 40 percent of the state lived on farms.¹³

In 1933, over 105,000 families, or 7.1 percent, were on the state's relief rolls, but by 1934, the relief rolls increased to nearly 250, 000 families, or 13 percent of the population.¹⁴ As a result, almost every aspect of Texas' economy suffered. Building construction nearly stopped completely, while cotton prices fell from 18 cents a pound in 1928 to 5 cents a pound in 1930. Likewise, the oil industry watched helplessly as the price of crude oil also plummeted from 60 cents to 5 cents a barrel.¹⁵ In La Grange's famed Chicken Ranch, customers who did not have hard currency were able to enjoy the company of Miss Jessie's girls by paying with live chickens.¹⁶ Unfortunately, others were unable to adapt to the

new realities of the depression. Just before shooting himself a distraught

Houstonian left the following:

This depression has got me licked. There is no work to be had. I can't accept charity and I am too proud to appeal to any kin or friends, and I'm too honest to steal. So I see no other course. A land flowing with milk and honey and a first-class mechanic can't make an honest living. I would rather take my chances with a just God than with an unjust humanity.¹⁷

However, federal monies were often distributed through the same state and local agencies that were overwhelmed at the onset of the depression. As a result, many of the families that needed relief the most were the ones that did not receive it due to bureaucratic delays. The New Deal established two principle methods allowing the state access to money. The first allowed states to receive federal funds by applying for grants. The second encouraged the development of works programs that would relieve unemployment and hopefully stimulate the local economy. Politically, it was hoped that the economic stimulus or "pump priming" would severally reduce the impacts of double-digit unemployment.

As a result of these political influences, Texas received approximately \$1.5 billion in the early years of the New Deal.¹⁸ The first dollars made their way to Texas through Jesse Jones' Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). Although this was not meant to totally absolve the state from its responsibility to its own needy citizens, over \$716,694,894 flowed from the federal depositories into the Texas economy from March 1933 to January 1938.¹⁹ As a result, Texas' state deficit dropped from over \$24 million, in 1935, to just over \$4 million in 1938.²⁰ The establishment of the Texas Relief Commission led to increased coordination between the relief activities of private and public relief agencies. Such coordination also ensured the various works programs would not be duplicative of each other and produce something of "public value."²¹ Many of the early works programs involved the building of roads, parks and other local construction projects.

In Houston, as in other Texas cities, federal monies appeared by the middle of the 1930s. The once sluggish Houston economy began booming again. Houston sponsored new housing projects, deepened the port and built the San Jacinto Memorial Shaft at a cost of \$250,000.²² Houston also received \$6.6 million dollars from the WPA and employed 589 people in 1935. During the

period 1935-1936 there were over 69 WPA construction projects in the Houston area valued at \$2.2 million.²³

However, the WPA was not the only source of federal funds the trickled into Houston during the depression. Jesse Jones insured the Public Works Administration (PWA) also received federal funds for local projects like the 570 foot San Jacinto Monument completed in 1935. Furthermore, the WPA employed more than 600,000 throughout Texas projects involving construction, art, literature, childcare, research, and music projects. However, critics locally echoed the sentiments of national detractors who believed many of the WPA's employment projects were "sometimes useful and sometimes make-work."²⁴

Nevertheless, by 1936 it seemed that the WPA's construction programs and those focusing on cultural activities provided enough support for every Texan to have a decent standard of living. While it was true that Texans appeared to fare better when compared with those across the country, some still lived in deplorable conditions. Unemployment, malnutrition, and homelessness were pervasive problems throughout the state. Even though millions of dollars were spent on relief, many of those that needed the relief funds the most were the very ones that "fell through the cracks."²⁵ Unfortunately, minorities were

most likely to suffer during the Depression from conditions like discrimination, unemployment, malnutrition, and homelessness.²⁶

Initially, private organizations established relief programs that provided a dole and/or food for the hungry and homeless, regardless of race. In Houston, the First Presbyterian Church provided meals to over 75 thousand individuals during the winter of 1930.²⁷ The influence of Jesse Jones meant Houston was spared the disastrous effects of failed banks and the resulting local economic disruption. Jones successfully coerced Houston's leaders to initiate plans that would keep even struggling banks solvent for the duration of the Depression. In her study of Houston's history, Marguerite Johnson found that Jones' national influence illustrated that "the men and women who controlled Houston in 1931 were willing to be responsible for their city's welfare."²⁸

Even with the patrician attitudes of Texas' powerbrokers, homelessness was still a devastating problem during the Depression. Unable to find work, thousands of Texans hitchhiked across the state looking for work and often the only shelter they found were "abandoned buildings, caves, dugouts, and shanties made of discarded boxes."²⁹ However, there were severe contradictions in Texas' communities with regards to the way Texans lived. Even in the

Depression, some communities maintained and flaunted their affluence with their pristine lawns, extravagant lifestyles, and immaculate homes complete with a staff of servants. On the other hand, there were places in Texas that resembled a third-world country.

In Dallas, for example, such contradictions were very visible. In one community there were the neatly manicured lawns of the city's elite where they paid "homage to God and educates his children in magnificent churches and schools that are second to none in beauty and facilities."³⁰ In another community, the city's working class, most often minorities and poor, often found themselves living slums and shantytowns.³¹ While Dallas' new political and social elites were taking the reins of city power, blacks and Hispanics in Dallas "continued to suffer from severely limited employment opportunities and an on-going shortage of decent housing."³²

Like homelessness, unemployment was also at crisis levels during the Depression. Statewide estimates of unemployment in 1932 exceeded 300,000, many of whom were homeless. Even though there were private relief agencies distributing clothes and/or cash, many minorities were unable to access their services because of the racist attitudes of the agency administrators. Two

instances illustrate the destructiveness of racism during the depression. The first example occurred in Houston where blacks and Hispanics were told not to apply for relief because there was not enough money to take care of the city's white families, who received priority when it came to doling out assistance.³³ The second involved the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) where Governor Allred requested additional funds to increase the number of CCC camps in Texas. However, many Texans opposed new CCC facilities because they believed they would be predominately "Negro" camps, even though the existing CCC facilities were already racially segregated.³⁴

Therefore, it was not surprising that blacks and Hispanics experienced the hardships of the depression to a greater degree than most whites. While there were white families that were homeless and destitute, the state unemployment rate for blacks was twice that of the whites.³⁵ Meanwhile, Texas' Hispanic community also experienced hardships during the 1930s, but this was no significant change from the post Reconstruction era when they struggled for recognition and survival in Texas' changing economy.³⁶ The history and contributions of Hispanic Texans is as varied and significant as that of any racial group that calls Texas home. However, during the 1930s the state's Hispanic

leadership undertook a course of action that in many ways diminished the contributions of their Texas ancestors. Racism in Texas has never been limited to blacks alone.

In order to alleviate the disastrous effects of racism in schools Hispanic parents removed their children from public schools in San Angelo in 1910 because they were segregated and inadequate. By the 1930s groups like the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) petitioned Texas' Supreme Court to consider Hispanics part of the "white race" so they would not experience segregation as the state's black population endured.³⁷ It was not until 1948 that the state legislature declared the segregation of Hispanic children from white children unconstitutional. Blacks would not enjoy that privilege until 1954's *Brown versus the Board of Education*, and in many school districts full integration did not occur until the 1970s.³⁸ However, by wanting to be classified as white, the Hispanic leadership negated the contributions of their ancestors by somehow implying that the only way to receive quality education was to turn their collective backs on their heritage and embrace the "white is right" strategy.

Unfortunately, the state's black leadership did not have the option to petition the courts to be considered "white." Therefore, blacks were forced to

deal with the economic conditions and racist environment of 1930s Texas. Still, in his recollections of his childhood Eddie Stimpson, Jr. tells the story of a black family of sharecroppers in Texas' rural countryside. Even though that archaic labor system was very reminiscent of slavery, many black families actually survived by establishing and maintaining strong central family units.³⁹

Nonetheless, there were challenges. The "dust bowl" conditions of the Depression made farming difficult, if not impossible. Black and white farmers suffered equally and often combined their meager resources in order to survive. However, by the late 1930s, after the dust storms subsided, farming in north Texas became profitable again. Stimpson recalled:

In the late thirties the dust storms gone, the earth around Collin was rich and the crop was flourishing. Cotton, corn and wheat was making good and the market was good. Crowded families in town began to thin out as the old farm houses that had been empty for several years came to life again with middle age farmer or farm hands. In Collin County most of the blacks come in from South and East Texas. The white farmers and farm hands come from Oklahoma and Kansas. The crops were good enough for this part of Texas to draw people from far and near.⁴⁰

Nonetheless, unemployment among blacks increased from 4.8 percent in 1930 to 8.8 percent in 1933, while white unemployment only rose from 4.2 percent to 5.4 percent in the same period. In agriculture, the Depression stimulated the use of tractors, the reduction of cotton production, the declining farm prices and reduced credit. These trends forced over 500,000 blacks off the land and reduced thousands of others from farmers to laborers. The number of black farm owners continued at about 20,000 in 1940. Black tenants declined in the 1930s from 65,000 to 32,000, even as black farm laborers increased by 25,000. Rural economic problems thrust thousands of blacks into Texas towns and cities and helped drive almost 20,000 to seek better conditions outside of Texas during the 1930s.

Economically, the discovery of oil near the East Texas town of Kilgore in 1930 provided the Texas with the kind of industry that was able to withstand the uncertainties of the Depression. Unlike earlier oil discoveries, however, the major oil companies did not control the fields in East Texas. This led to a dramatic conflict between independent oil producers and the major oil companies. Eventually, Governor Ross Sterling sent state troops into East Texas to insure the independents complied with the state order that established quotas

on oil production.⁴¹ With Sterling's support over 80 percent of East Texas' oil fields were controlled by the major oil companies. As a result, Houston oil men like R.E. Smith, Robert Welch, H.R. Cullen, James Abercrombie and George Strake amassed sizable fortunes in the oil industry.⁴²

While the overall economic conditions in Houston were not good, the oil industry provided such effective protection that the city was barely affected. Nonetheless, the oil industry allowed Houston and several East Texas communities to economically survive the hardships of the depression better than their agricultural counterparts in other parts of the state. For example, during 1931 the decline of cotton prices, from 18 cents per pound to 6 cents per pound, led the state legislature to limit the production of cotton.⁴³

Still, farmers benefited from higher incomes from the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). Incidentally, the AAA was remarkably similar to a program proposed by the Populists of the late 19th century by providing price protection, expanded money supply, and easy farm credit.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the AAA swept away 50 years of the tenant farm system and government payments became a substantial part of the farmer's income and eventually led to their political allegiance to the Democrats and the New Deal.⁴⁵

Another agricultural-related industry that received federal support was the state's lumber industry. The New Deal's CCC created jobs for hundreds of young Texans that replanted acres of depleted forests. By the end of the 1930s Texas' lumber industry produced one billion board feet of lumber, the quantity last produced in the 1920s.

Because of the varied economic and social conditions found in Texas, the impact of the Depression varied throughout the state. For example, while unemployment was not at the levels of other cities, many of those employed in Dallas lived in conditions worse than that of slaves during the antebellum period.⁴⁶ Women were particularly susceptible to maltreatment in one of Dallas' many garment factories. In her study of Dallas, Patricia Everage Hill found that sweatshop managers did not value the labor of women. She found that Dallas' culture viewed working women as "unladylike."⁴⁷ Not only did this type of behavior and attitude devalue the work of women, it negatively influenced those men who oftentimes found themselves underemployed. As a result, most men who could have genuinely benefited from a working spouse refused her assistance for fear of social ostracism.

The local economy in Galveston, once the strongest in the state, continued to rely on tourism, the activities of its port, the University of Texas Medical Branch and the new Texas State Psychopathic hospital as stabilizing influences.⁴⁸ Even though tax delinquency reached 50 percent, Galveston continued to profit from the generosity of its philanthropists. Like Houston, Galveston also established private organizations that provided relief for the needy. The City's Community Chest, the local YMCA, and the Salvation Army "became the clearing house for meal tickets and the care of vagrants."⁴⁹ Galveston also benefited from the WPA financial coffers. In 1938, the WPA employed 438 men and 235 women and received \$858,872 for projects that involved roads, drainage, sewers, malaria control, and the building of new schools and the repair of older ones.⁵⁰

As a result of their greater problems during the Depression, blacks contributed a higher proportion of the unemployed and persons on relief than their population percentage. In Austin, blacks were just 18 percent of the population but made up almost 36 percent of the unemployed during 1931 to 1932. As late of 1937, black unemployment remained higher than their share of the population. Furthermore, average wages for black laborers in Austin fell from \$.40 to \$.50 per hour in 1928 to \$.25 per hour in 1933. Black family income

declined from an average of \$978 in 1928 to \$874 in 1933. Even though these figures increased by 1935, more than 60 percent of black families earned less than \$1,000 per year in the mid-1930s.⁵¹

Even though racial barriers in Texas faded briefly as the unemployed and the homeless, both black and white, often shared homeless shelters and police harassment. Only two black banks, the farmer's Bank and Trust of Fort Worth and the Farmer's Bank of Waco and two black insurance companies, The Excelsior Mutual of Dallas and the Watchtower Mutual of Houston, actually survived the chaos and devastation caused by the Depression.⁵²

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Texas survived the Depression based on the strength of local politicians in Roosevelt's administration. Garner, Rayburn, and Jones funneled millions of dollars to Texas' relief programs and influenced national politics for the next several decades. Still, Texans saw the New Deal as a threat to their local autonomy and eventually an opposition group appeared that challenged Roosevelt's influence in Texas. The Constitutional Democrats embodied the agrarian ideology of the Jefferson but had little influence in Texas during the 1936 elections.

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End Notes

¹ Narrative Report, District 10, November 1940.

² Organizational minutes, Shiloh Baptist Church, April 27, 1934.

³ For more information about the careers and national/state influences of Garner, Rayburn, and Jones see the following: <http://www.christers.net/veeps/john-garner.html>; Lionel Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal* (Garland Publishing Inc., 1983), 160-166; Ben Procter and Archie McDonald, *The Texas Heritage* (Harlan Davidson Inc, 1998), 118; and Mike Kingston, *A Concise of History of Texas* (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991), 201. Garner enjoyed early influence in Roosevelt's administration. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1903 to 1933, and became Speaker of the House during the last two years of Hoover's administration. During the 1932 Democratic convention, Garner ran for the nomination but eventually conceded to Roosevelt and accepted the vice president's nomination. As a result of his congressional influence, Garner influenced every piece of New Deal legislation, particularly funding appropriations. Until 1937, he was generally considered the most powerful vice president in U.S. history. However, he vehemently disagreed with Roosevelt's plan of enlarging the Supreme Court in 1937 and subsequently was not Roosevelt's running mate in the 1940 election. Several other Texans either served or chaired major legislative committees: Sam Rayburn – Interstate and Foreign Commerce; Hatton Sumners – Judiciary; Fritz Lanham – Public Buildings and Grounds; JJ Mansfield – Rivers and Harbors; and James Buchanan – Appropriations.

⁴ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 108-113.

⁵ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 87-91.

⁶ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 87-91.

⁷ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 95.

⁸ James Haley, *From Spindletop Through World War II* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 183-184.

⁹ Johnson's Great Society policies of the 1960s remained very close to the ideals of the New Deal by establishing the Federal government's authority to provide basic safeguards for civil liberties. Unfortunately, the Great Society never fully reached maturity as the financial demands of the Vietnam War siphoned the needed funding to eliminate poverty throughout the country.

¹⁰ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 99.

¹¹ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 99-105. Of the \$116,009,733 of funds spent for state relief programs, \$96,234,335 came from Federal coffers. Furthermore, the author argued that Allred never missed an opportunity to WPA administrator Hopkins for money.

¹² Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 100.

¹³ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 3. The author estimated that 70 percent of the population was directly or indirectly dependent on cotton for a living. Therefore, when cotton prices fell to 5 cents per pound, the impact of the depression was "real in rural areas."

¹⁴ Rupert Richardson, et al. *Texas: The Lone Star State* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001), 384.

- ¹⁵ Richardson, et al. *Texas: The Lone Star State* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001), 384.
- ¹⁶ Haley, *From Spindletop Through World War II* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 188-189 and Roy Barkley and Mark Odintz. *The Portable Handbook of Texas* (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 2000), 219.
- ¹⁷ The Houston-Post Dispatch, November 4, 1930.
- ¹⁸ Mike Kingston, *A Concise of History of Texas* (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991), 201.
- ¹⁹ Robert Calvert et al, *The History of Texas* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1996), 322.
- ²⁰ Calvert et al, *The History of Texas* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1996), 323.
- ²¹ Richardson, et al. *Texas: The Lone Star State* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001), 384.
- ²² Marguerite Johnson, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 302.
- ²³ Johnson, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 302.
- ²⁴ Haley, *From Spindletop Through World War II* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 187.
- ²⁵ Calvert et al, *The History of Texas* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1996), 323.
- ²⁶ Calvert et al, *The History of Texas* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1996), 323.
- ²⁷ Johnson, p285. Even though racism existed in Houston, the author made sure the reader understood that benevolent organizations (churches) provided relief to all Houstonians regardless of "race and creed."
- ²⁸ Johnson, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 287-288.
- ²⁹ Richardson, et al. *Texas: The Lone Star State* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001), 384.
- ³⁰ Patricia Everage Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 129.
- ³¹ Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 129.
- ³² Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 126-127.
- ³³ Kingston, *A Concise of History of Texas* (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991), 200.
- ³⁴ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 107. In his article, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Negro," John Salmond found racism in the management of CCC camps was not restricted to Texas. Throughout the South blacks were systematically excluded from selection to CCC facilities, even though in many counties blacks constituted more than 50 percent of the population. Salmond also found the issue of racism in the selection process reached Franklin Roosevelt who failed to challenge the South's continued segregation and degradation of blacks. As with the issue of lynching, the President decided he would not risk his larger New Deal programs or his reputation by coming to the aid of blacks.
- ³⁵ Richardson, et al. *Texas: The Lone Star State* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001), 384.
- ³⁶ Two studies by Arnoldo De León illustrated the history and racism experienced by the Hispanic community in Texas. In *They Called Them Greasers*, De León focused on the discrimination faced by Mexicans during the period 1821-1900. He found that whites in Texas believed Mexicans were culturally inferior, Mexican women to be sexually promiscuous, and overall could not be trusted to be loyal American citizens. Like blacks, Mexicans were routinely murdered and lynched. In *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt*, De León focused on the building of Mexican

communities in Houston. In the 1930s he found the Mexican community used the same strategy for survival as the black community, reliance on churches, cultural maintenance, and community self-reliance. Even though many Mexicans returned to Mexico during the Depression, De León found that those who stayed in Houston tried to end systematic racism through civil rights organizations: Latin American Club, League of United Latin American Citizens, and in the 1960s, La Raza. Likewise, Emilio Zamora also found those Mexican communities along Texas' border regions, like those in the urban areas, also established social and labor organizations as a way of confronting the hardships of the depression.

³⁷ Whisenhunt, p350. Also see David Montejano's *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* for a discussion of Mexican integration during the period 1920-1940.

³⁸ See Thomas Cole's study of the integration of Houston, *No Color is My Kind*, and David McCombs' seminal history of Houston in *Houston: the Bayou City*.

³⁹ Eddie Stimpson, Jr. *A Black Sharecropper's Recollections of the Depression* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1999), 4-16.

⁴⁰ Stimpson, Jr. *A Black Sharecropper's Recollections of the Depression* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1999), 19.

⁴¹ Kingston, *A Concise of History of Texas* (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991), 198 and Haley, pgs167-175. Prior to becoming Governor, sterling was founder of Humble Oil and many Texans criticized his handling of the conflict between the independents and the major oil producers. Since he made his money as a part of the major oil producers, many felt his actions and policies defended the property rights, and, perhaps more importantly, the profits of his fellow oilmen.

⁴² Johnson, *Houston: The Unknown City 1836-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 291.

⁴³ Kingston, *A Concise of History of Texas* (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991), 198. The following year the cotton acreage limitation bill was declared unconstitutional.

⁴⁴ Fehrenbach, pgs651-2 and Mike Kingston, *A Concise of History of Texas* (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991), 201. Fehrenbach found that many in Texas' business community opposed Roosevelt's neo-Populist strategy, but the masses of the people welcomed the opportunity to use Federal monies to augment state surpluses in agricultural relief programs.

⁴⁵ Patenaude, *Texans, Politics, and the New Deal*, 166.

⁴⁶ Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 130.

⁴⁷ Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 130. In describing the conflicts between the workers in the garment industry and in the city's industrial sector, Hill found the labor problems persisted until the US' entry into WWII.

⁴⁸ David McComb, *Galveston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 182.

⁴⁹ McComb, *Galveston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 182.

⁵⁰ McComb, *Galveston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 182.

⁵¹ Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing, 1982), 153-154.

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The Architecture of Genealogy and Storytelling

Dr. Lason Mackey-Hines

Abstract

Exploring family history has become prominent in many African and Native American households as individuals curiosity regarding their lineage continues to grow. Unfortunately studying one's African and Native American genealogy involves an enormous amount of time, expense, and frustration. Many genealogy researchers have found searching for African and Native American family past experiences is often not documented and challenging to authenticate as records have been either lost, not recorded, or burned. Storytelling provides a genealogist searching for clues a starting place for deconstructing and linking probable connections to their past. Storytelling can be one of the most essential phases of genealogy in helping the researcher find clues in the story. The architecture of genealogy through storytelling is having the ability to ask questions, listen to the stories, and search for meaning within the stories being communicated. The one place we seldom consider when researching for our past is the stories being told throughout our families, for it is storytelling that can lead us to some truth in preserving our past.

The Architecture of Genealogy

The historical influences on storytelling are substantial physiognomies of the African, African American and Native American oral tradition. The oral traditions of storytelling uncover the intensity of the lived phenomena of these rich cultures, and taps into existing knowledge creating a cultural bond. In the African culture the *griot* is the oral historian accountable for cultural and

community sustainability, education, and the transmission of knowledge. The Native American storyteller was once known as a “*trickster*” skilled in entertaining, educating, and communicating moral instruction. For African and Native Americans this was the structure for transferring family history values and traditions down to generations.



Figure 1: Photo Courtesy of Author

Hundreds of years ago, African and Native Americans were the center of the world because of their significant discoveries, abilities, and contributions to the world⁸⁷. In excess of twenty-million people of Africa came to the new founded territory as a result of the slave trade in 1444, and it was then the

individuality, customs, and traditions began to slowly fade and were only rekindled through storytelling. In the winter of 1838, over 17,000 Indians were removed from their homeland and forced to travel to Oklahoma as a result of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. During the six month journey, more than 4,000 Indians died along this trail, known today as the 'Trail of Tears.' Despite the humiliation, agony, and the attempt to destroy ethnicities, African and Native Americans have been unwavering in trying to hold onto as many customs, and native languages passed down through storytelling, folklore, music, and dance.



Figure 2: Photo Courtesy of Author

The architecture of genealogy and human curiosity are connected the same as knowledge and skepticism in our expedition to obtain reality and understanding. The construction of genealogy permits an individual to nurture an appreciation of heritage and identity, that may have not been explain in totality or truth. Genealogy and the exploration of family history involve looking for and comprehending the misplaced pieces of our ancestor's lives that

provided the creation of history. For many, storytelling was a framework of genealogy.

African and Native American legends and storytelling disclose the turbulent antiquity of these groups forcibly eradicated from their native land and subject to multiple forms of exploitation. Storytelling provided African and Native Americans a venue for delivering experiences, healing and cultivating family members, and educating the community on the struggles, the history, traditions, and achievements. Storytelling for this population was the capsule of preserving and passing down the truths of a rich genealogy.



Figure 3: Photo Courtesy of Lorenzo Hines

Foucault suggested an increase ‘vulnerability to criticism of things, practices, institutions and discourse’²not knowing the inquiry into an individual’s genealogy would entitle the same reference. Genealogy, for the discussion of respective exploration, is a justification of the foundation and historical extension of something. Architectural preservation of genealogy

through storytelling is a discipline and the in-depth study into the lived experiences, the phenomena of kinfolk. Genealogy encompasses the skillful collection of immeasurable resources, sometimes inaccurate; to construct a defense for ongoing examining of materials and bias to support an individual's consciousness. The production of genealogy involves researching from the present to the past, one generation at a time, harvesting pieces and clues along the way to prove lineage from one generation to the next. For many, analyzing the basis for storytelling provided a starting point in seeking the truth.

The Framework of Genealogy

To understand the popular insurgence in the pursuit of an individual's family history, an individual must ascertain the rationale for spending an enormous amount of time and expenses to acquire a healthier depiction of their ancestor's lives. The primary inspiration is human inquisitiveness. Einstein wrote the most vital challenge an individual can do is to by no means stop questioning³. Foucault affirms genealogy as demanding knowledge of details and an immense collection of source materials and data⁴. Individuals begin to trace their genealogy because they want to be acquainted with whom and what their

ancestors were involved in, how they lived, and where the connections of various surnames begin and end. Many family researchers want to know if the oral stories passed down from generation hold truth.



Figure 4: Still standing, home where Negroes once occupied. Photo Courtesy of Author

Figure 5: Entering a Native American Village. A replica of many years ago. Photo Courtesy of Lorenzo Hines



Before the birth of Christ, the Egyptian pharaohs had a chronicle of their genealogy etched in stone⁵. Alex Haley was instrumental in producing a lucid, but distressing lens into the exposure of African American family history when he published the book *Roots* in 1976 based on his genealogy. The same results of genealogical resources and materials may not occur when seeking detailed information into the lives of Norris Wright Cuney, Henry O. Flipper, or William Goyens. Unfortunately, the expedition into genealogy for African and Native Americans is limited as a result of record keeping doctrines and societal

circumstances. Although, information that is found when conducting research and scrutinizing documents can be rewarding, in many situations the results open doors of further questioning. Genealogy, “disturbs formerly secure foundations of knowledge and understanding’, and this happens not to replace an unorthodox and safe institution, ‘but to produce an awareness of the complexity, contingency, and, fragility of historical forms”⁶. One of the first directives genealogists ascertain is not to develop an opinion on the past hastily. Instead, erecting the structure of genealogical history to explore and comprehend the environment their ancestors cherished.

Another caveat in the exploration for knowledge on an individual’s past lineage is to look for proof from multiple resources. In an age of information technology, a vast amount of resources are available to choose from – some factual and others are only opinions not necessarily proven. Many family researchers begin with memories of family storytelling and storytelling while looking at pictures. Although stories are passed down from generation, they abstract a different translation of truth and meaning depending on the individual presenting the information, or the experiences they have had in relationship to the story. Collecting family history from discussions permits the interviewee to

reflect and transmit information through memories and lived experiences, although they may not necessarily know from where the oral history derived. For many African and Native Americans, storytelling is all the information they may have to begin a journey into the past.

Genealogy is a landscape of science. As with the scientist, the genealogist seeks information and then determines the validity of the material retrieved. The genealogist may start with a belief and then raise questions to address the information and search for the truth. A belief becomes truth when the idea can reference back to a related fact⁷. In seeking the truth, a genealogist begins with extracting information from various sources and dissecting every detail from the “subtexts and contexts in which they appear”⁸. Through the curiosity of a genealogist’s quest for more information, skepticism can be valued in assisting and evaluating truth from fiction. The simple task of examining a census, birth military, death record, or other collected documentation can provide a lens into the age, occupation, skill, spelling of names, and neighbors of an individual. When examining a document of this magnitude, the architecture of genealogy becomes the curiosity in wanting to construct more with the information collected.

An individual remembers incidents, situations and people in relationship to how significant they are to him or her⁹. Genealogy research and the uncovering of information from resources can elicit overwhelming reactions if an individual has a connection to the process. In researching of one's past, the genealogist allows history to disperse the 'chimers of the origin, somewhat in the manner of the pious philosopher who needs a doctor to banish the shadow of his soul'¹⁰. The genealogist must be able to recognize various events of history applicable to his or her research to help direct their emotional quest and reluctance for more. History accumulates a collection of events, data, and circumstances for the genealogist to decipher fact or fiction.

A genealogist who uncovers a family mystery through research becomes ecstatic in the breakthrough through the emotion of connectivity. It is then when the genealogist makes the connection to the story once told, or the conversations of family past that begins to come full circle and immersed in the reality of what has been recently discovered through research. A genealogical find can be as diminutive as discovering the birthplace of an individual's great-great grandparents, the parents of a relative, or the actual heritage of the family. The activity of genealogical research is an ongoing task and does not have an end

result. The consistent quest of collecting and examining resources is often done by individuals who have a vast interest or connection in attaining more insight from past storytelling and interpretations. Genealogy is a quest for legitimacy and seeking to preserve and protect the stories once told.

Ancestry is not manufactured to determine destiny, however, the process of collective family experiences engineer development of individual and shared perception. Genealogy involves a series of building tools permitting the researcher to question, reflect, examining and draw conclusions based on collected data. According to Foucault, genealogy functions and thrives on the assumptions of many entangled and perplexed beliefs and collections. Genealogy requires endurance, an understanding and knowledge of scrutinizing elements and organizing a vast accumulation of foundational materials to help in merging together a web of viewpoints from multiple sources. Nietzsche believes the final attribute of history is the declaration of knowledge as an individual's perspective¹¹.

The best place to start on the quest to search African and Native American family history is to begin with living relatives and learn through their experiences and storytelling. Important to note, there will be some family

members unwilling to disclose the hardship they endured in the past. Genealogy involves visiting and interviewing older family members about shared heritage¹² and listening to their stories passed down from generations. In constructing an architectural genealogy of past experiences and lineage, an individual may be more cooperative in divulging past experiences through the art of storytelling. Storytelling is the instrument used to shape the initial development of one's thinking and character.



Figure 6: Grandparents of Author; Photo Courtesy of Author

Storytelling and Genealogy

Another breakout has occurred during the cold blistery winter of 1706 in North Carolina. The sounds of the waves bouncing against the shore are not as comforting as they once were. As the night falls upon her skin four times, she hears beyond the cries of her people and fear for her life. She rest uncomfortably in the shadows of limbs and leaves with only a sound of unsteady heartbeats to calm her breaths. Her hunger pains are far from what awaits her if she leaves the solitude of the tree protecting her from the dangers below. Hatteras was once a place to call home it has since become a haven for the obliteration of her family and homeland. She is isolated, petrified, and lost. The only company she keeps is the crooning of the nearby mockingbird looking at her with fright for invading his place of dwelling. The pains rumbling through her stomach are silenced by the sounds of battle, the cries of loved ones, and the burning of the nearby village, her village. She is abandoned, disoriented and cold. She is not sure what awaits her in the light, she only prays for survival. If she makes it through this season, she would have lived to

see eleven. She hopes to rekindle her family, customs, and survive to birth a generation of future descendants born from the womb of native ancestry.

He heard the wrestling of branches from the tree above. His eyes looked upon her cradling the tree and shaking from the coldness of the air wrapped in her deerskin clothing. She was beautiful, small in stature, with the current of dark long hair covering her body from the winter elements. He encouraged her to come down from the tree and he would protect her from all harm. The sounds of the fighting and the smell of burning have since disappeared. The only noise was the chattering of her teeth and the grumbling from her stomach. She stopped counting the moons after six had passed, and awaited the smell of death to fall upon her body. Her only choice was to fall into the hands of the whiteface standing below her gazing up into her protected place of tree shelter. She was near death anyway.

As she came down from the tree, he slowly extended his hand, reaching for her to steady her balance. He locks eye to eye with her as he gazed upon her startling green eyes. She walks to him with caution and then collapse in his arms. This kind man takes her into his home and cares for her as his own. Her name was Morning Star of the Hatteras.

Validating through Storytelling

If it had not been through the constant probing of storytelling from my grandfather in wanting us to preserve the family name, I would have never looked into the history of the Mattamuskeet Indians of North Carolina from which he came. Many may believe the lived experiences, and customs of the Indians of the Mattamuskeet Reservation of Hyde, County was abandoned as a result of wars, and the mixing of races with Whites and Blacks during the nineteenth century. Family members from the Indians of Mattamuskeet continue in this day to be pursued for studies, interviews, DNA testing, and acquisition into the possible connection of the Lost Colony and other historical events from North Carolina. Ancestors of the Mattamuskeet surnames: Barber, Squires, Mackey, Collins, Bryant, Gibbs, and Longtom line communicated their experiences through storytelling and the hidden messages left behind in the naming of family, the preservation of photos, land records, documents, and interviews. There are hidden gems all throughout the Eastern North Carolina area providing a glimpse of proof from stories once told through the act of storytelling passed down from generations. The stories of my grandfather led me to believe there

was some importance to examine further and what I found was worth continuing the legacy of storytelling to my children.

During the period of 1715 through 1792, King Squires and King Mackey left a trail of critical business transactions for documentation detailing the acquisition and selling of land in North Carolina. The selling of land began approximately in 1731 and ended in the early 1760s. Significant in the documents are the signatures of the individuals signing the deeds for land sells leaving a trace of history and factual information. *"The chief men of the village were Charles and John Squires, Long Tom, Henry Gibbs, Thomas, Whahab, Jeannette, John Padgett, John Barbour, and John Mackey"*¹³. Although the wars eradicated a large portion of the family causing the residual members to unite with other tribes for survival, the storytelling of experiences, customs, and the legacy continued to be passed down from generation. *"The Mattamuskeet, Croatan, Machapungo, and Whappopin Indians all merged at the Mattamuskeet Indian Reservation about 1730."*¹⁴

A large portion of the descendants in this tribe lived well over 100 years of age to tell their story and share their customs, traditions, values, and experiences with family members. *"The Coree, Machapungo, Mattamuskeet and*

Hatteras Indians did not survive as individual tribes, but joined others such as the Tuscarora, Catawba or Saponi, dispersed, moved inland"¹⁵, or traveled into other states for protection. The physical features of this tribe may have been lost over the years as a result of the mixing of races, but the rich traditions and spiritual perspectives are passed down from generation through storytelling as in the story on *Morning Star*, the sharing of enlightening wisdom through the use of photographs, and other significant documentation.



Figure 7: A member of the Mackey clan. Photo Courtesy of Author

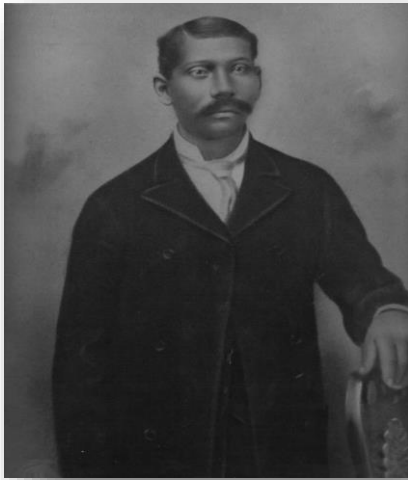


Figure 8: Benjamin L. Mackey, b. 1867; GGGrandfather of Author

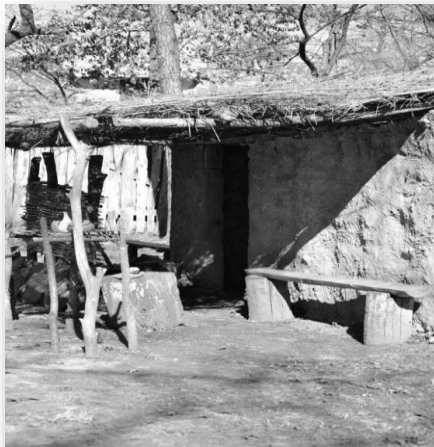


Figure 9: Indian village. Photo Courtesy of Lorenzo Hines

The history of African and Native American cultures is pointless unless shared. The sharing of history through storytelling provides an understanding into the lives of our ancestors, the blueprints supporting the foundation and determining the events influencing our present. The lives and rich cultural history of the Indians of Mattamuskeet and other family lines of individuals representing African and Native Americans who are working diligently to ensure legacies will not be forgotten. As the bond to create and reconnect is growing with the help of the internet, genealogical television shows, lost photographs, and family ties are coming together to share stories, preserve the history and celebrate the architect of genealogy through storytelling!

Storytelling Note: *Mourning Star was my grandmother.*

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