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Saving Galveston:  
A History of the Galveston Historical Foundation

by

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ABSTRACT

Saving Galveston:
A History of the Galveston Historical Foundation

by

Sally Anne Schmidt

The history of the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF) reveals how innovative Galvestonians looked to the past to create a future for their distressed city and inspired the development of one of the nation’s leading local historic preservation organizations. Galveston, an island city fifty miles south of Houston, flourished economically and culturally as Texas’s leading city during the nineteenth century. By 1900, islanders had built a city filled with handsome commercial and residential structures that reflected Galveston’s significant status. The city rebuilt following the devastating Hurricane of 1900, but it never recovered its past glory. With the opening of the Houston Ship Channel in 1914 and the overall growth of Houston, Galveston’s prominence slipped away.

In 1954 a group of preservation-minded men and women organized the Galveston Historical Foundation to prevent the destruction of the second oldest house on the island, the Samuel May Williams House. Influenced by past Galveston historical societies, GHF’s volunteer leadership worked to raise awareness of the city’s historical and architectural treasures. Many born-on-the-island Galvestonians did not initially see the
purpose of saving dilapidated houses and abandoned commercial buildings, and they had to be persuaded. Little-by-little GHF leaders succeeded and the preservation movement found a foothold on the island. With the hiring of the Foundation’s first executive director, Peter Brink, in 1973 and the establishment of a revolving fund to save commercial properties on the Strand, GHF began to materially impact the island’s physical, cultural, and economic landscape. The subsequent work of the Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s was not easy, but it resulted in the evolution of Galveston from a run-down, second-rate, beach town into a popular destination for historically-minded tourists. It also helped begin the positive transformation that occurred in Galveston’s residential neighborhoods and inspired homeowners (of all economic backgrounds) to maintain their property. As GHF worked to revitalize the city, the Foundation itself transformed from a small, volunteer-led historical society into a professionally-managed, nationally-recognized, non-profit institution.
Acknowledgements

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The Rice University History Department has supported me throughout this dissertation and my graduate career. The department office staff, including Paula Platt, Rachel Zepeda, Anita P. Smith, Verva Densmore, and Lisa Tate, has quietly made sure the administrative requirements were taken care of. In addition, their kind smiles and encouragement helped me in times of need. My Rice peers, especially Francelle Blum, David Connolly, Gary Garrett, and Kersten Biehn, have walked beside me on this journey. Their support and success has been a true inspiration. Kersten has provided true refuge from the storm, literally and figuratively, and I thank her for her friendship. I am especially grateful for the members of my dissertation committee, John Boles, Ira Gruber, and Joe Manca. They have supported and enriched my work — both this dissertation and
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Introduction

On September 12 and 13, 2008, as the writing of this dissertation came to a close, Galveston Island suffered a devastating hurricane. Hurricane Ike was not the first storm to ravage the island, nor was it the most destructive — the 1900 Hurricane of September 8 and 9 continues to hold the title of deadliest natural disaster in United States history. But Ike’s 100-plus mile per hour winds and a twelve-foot storm surge devastated the island. Over one million Gulf Coast residents evacuated in advance of the storm, and as a result, in terms of human life, the losses were relatively low with forty people in the Galveston-Bolivar area reported dead and thirteen missing as of early November 2008 — a miniscule number when compared to the 6,000 to 8,000 killed in 1900. Financially and physically, however, Ike’s impact is staggering. Ten days after the storm, Galveston’s Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas and other city and county officials asked the federal government for approximately $2.2 billion to rebuild the city, repair the port, and reopen the Galveston County’s largest employer, the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). UTMB sustained over $710 million in damage from the storm, and its John Sealy Hospital, Level 1 Trauma Center, and Medical School were all forced to shut down. Over ten feet of water flooded the downtown business district, including the Strand National Landmark Historic District. Ike washed away the historic Balinese Room and other pleasure piers located along the seawall. Approximately 75 percent of Galveston’s houses suffered flood damage and the city’s planning department estimates that 20 percent of the housing stock was damaged beyond repair. Over 20,000 of the island city’s approximate 60,000 residents lost their homes and possessions. A month following the storm, only about 60 percent of the residents had returned to island —
thousands were still without power or other utilities and 420 still resided in a Red Cross
tent city. Debris, approximately 1.5 million cubic yards, was everywhere and an
unpleasant odor dominated the Island City. In the aftermath of Ike, much of Galveston
Island lay in ruins.¹

Hurricane Ike brought national attention to Galveston, and America watched
closely as Geraldo Rivera and other television journalists reported live from the seawall.
As soon as a month later, however, with the country distracted by a failing economy and
a contentious presidential election, the impact of the island’s devastation was fading from
the collective consciousness. Former United States Presidents George H. W. Bush and
Bill Clinton toured the island on October 14 in an effort to bring attention to the Texas
Gulf Coast and raise money for its restoration. Bush reported “abject devastation” and
Clinton stated, “I felt there was a lot of very severe destruction, and I don’t think the
American people know.”² Houston returned to normal, despite a smattering of boarded
up skyscraper windows, and the nation moved on. Dolph Tillotson, publisher of the
Galveston Daily News, wrote about it in an October 26, 2008, editorial. He recounted a

² Kever, “Former Presidents Tour Damage.”
recent trip to a newspaper convention in Miami where statements such as “I guess things are getting back to normal now, huh?” permeated his conversations. Tillotson wrote, “They knew we’d had a storm. They knew it was bad, but there was no conception of what we in Galveston face — business community decimated, population reduced, piles of stinking debris everywhere and more than 1,000 people still living in shelters. . . . By and large, however, I found the world outside Galveston has moved past Ike.” Tillotson continued:

But Galveston needs help, and lots of it, from the Texas Senate and House delegations. Our local politicians must marshal that support, and they must do it aggressively. We need support from businesses that have locations in Galveston County. They must return, and they must get back in business quickly. We need them. Things are far from normal in Galveston. Take a drive in Channelview or Bayou Shore Drive or the middle-class neighborhoods north and south of Offatts Bayou. Take a drive through the war zone formerly known as downtown Galveston.

Our town is under siege to destruction, loss and collapse, and middle-class families are wondering whether to return and if they can return. We can’t afford to sit quietly and hope people outside the region notice. We’ve got to do some yelling.³

Fortunately Galveston has a history of recovery, and islanders have a unique spirit and determination that will continue to inspire the city’s difficult restoration efforts.

Galvestonians love the sandbar they call home, and they will rebuild.

Hurricane Ike has truly challenged the Galveston community, and as Tillotson reminded readers, the struggle is far from over. One established island institution naturally stepped into a public assistance and stewardship role. The Galveston Historical

Foundation (GHF) has rallied to the rebuilding and preservation cause. Responsible for thirteen historic structures in Galveston, including the 1859 Ashton Villa, the 1886-1892 Gresham House (also known as the Bishop’s Palace), the 1859 St. Joseph’s Church, the 1838 Menard Home, the 1839 Samuel May Williams House, the 1880 Garten Verein, the Galveston County Historical Museum, the 1861 Custom House, the Texas Seaport Museum, and the 1877 Tall Ship Elissa, the Foundation’s staff members and a corps of volunteers worked to carry out GHF’s established hurricane preparation procedures as the storm approached. Much of the staff evacuated to Austin, but director of events Clay Wade, events coordinator Eve Monteith, and facilities manager David Darden remained on the island and reported the condition of the Foundation’s properties to the evacuated staff and leaders. As the displaced Galvestonians became aware of the mass destruction in the city, GHF set up temporary headquarters in Austin at Preservation Texas, the state’s nonprofit preservation organization, and began planning for Galveston’s recovery.

GHF’s structures suffered varying degrees of damage in the hurricane. The Elissa came through the storm while docked at Pier 22 with only damage to her sails and riggings. At the nearby Texas Seaport Museum, however, most of the exhibits were damaged or destroyed. The Menard House, the Williams House, and the Garten Verein all survived unharmed. St. Joseph’s Church lost a few windows and the Galveston County Historical Museum took in water in the basement. The third-story windows at the Gresham House blew out and the ground floor visitor’s center received three feet of

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water. Of the properties cared for by GHF, Ashton Villa and the Custom House suffered the most. Aston Villa was flooded with three to four feet of water and hurricane sludge. Mold formed very quickly on the walls, but as soon as residents were allowed back on the island, GHF was able to remediate the house and send some of the historic furnishings to conservation. As of late October 2008, the historic house museum remains closed indefinitely and much work is needed to restore Ashton Villa. The storm surge flooded the Custom House, GHF’s headquarters, with five to eight feet of water. Unfortunately, the structure held the water for some time, and mold penetrated ten to twelve feet high. Exhibits, office equipment, furniture, retail items in storage, and files from the accounting and membership departments were all destroyed. The Preservation Resource Center and Library, containing thirty years of research material on Galveston’s historic structures, was also lost. The Foundation’s Salvage Warehouse received several feet of flooding as did the storage warehouse on Mechanic Street. Foundation-owned vehicles parked on the elevated ramp at the storage warehouse were lost. GHF kept props, signs, and other materials used for Dickens’ on the Strand, the Historic Homes Tour, and other programs at the Mechanic Street warehouse — all were destroyed or damaged. Mechanic Street was also where, in a locked cage on the ground floor of the warehouse, the Foundation stored its institutional records — documents utilized to research and write this dissertation.5

GHF is one of the largest local historic preservation organizations in the United States. Before Hurricane Ike, it employed seventy full and part-time employees. Now, that number is closer to thirty. It boasts over two thousand members and is well known in preservation circles as an innovative leader in the movement to save historic structures. In the aftermath of Ike, GHF called upon and continues to utilize its connections with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other similar organizations, such as Preservation Texas and the Texas Historical Commission, to seek help in rebuilding the community. The Foundation issued a call for volunteer engineers and architects to assist with the recovery effort and asked for financial donations almost immediately. In cooperation with the National Trust, Preservation Texas, and Historic Houston, GHF kept preservation-minded individuals informed about the post-Ike conditions through e-mail newsletters and press releases. Peter Brink, executive director of GHF from 1973 to 1989 and current Senior Vice-President of Programs for the National Trust, blogged “Reports from Galveston” on the National Trust’s website. Despite the news of mass destruction, one message dominated these communications — that the unique spirit of Galvestonians would persevere and the Queen City of the Gulf would be resurrected.6

The Foundation has taken a leading role in the recovery effort. In addition to actual physical clean-up of the structures maintained by the organization, GHF staff members organized information sheets to help educate residents on everything from

dealing with mold remediation, saving treasured papers, photographs, and objects, and finding disaster assistance. Beginning on Tuesday, September 21, staff members and volunteers went door-to-door offering information packets and "flood buckets," containing much needed supplies such as bleach, scouring pads, sponges, cleaners, gloves, insect repellent, and heavy duty trash bags, donated by the United Methodist Committee on Relief. The Foundation also offered structural assessments of storm-damaged historic homes, and as it officially resumed "regular operations" in Galveston on Monday, September 29, staff members encouraged homeowners to call them for assistance. KWAL Paint partnered with the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund and GHF in early October to offer up to 20 sheets of free drywall to low- to moderate-income homeowners, and the Foundation and the City of Galveston Planning Department sponsored a meeting for residents on October 15 “to address the plethora of unsubstantiated ideas that have been circulating throughout the city about appropriate ways to remediate flood damage to homes.”

As Galveston enters its second month of storm recovery, the Galveston Historical Foundation continues to work diligently to help the community rebuild. Its influence is more than simply saving old buildings or managing historic house museums. The Galveston Historical Foundation is taking a leading role in the effort to return the city to "normal" and helping anyway it can. After discovering "very few of our preservation colleagues knew how to respond when we asked questions early on after Hurricane Ike," Dwayne Jones, executive director of GHF,

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has committed GHF to becoming “the ‘go to’ organization when our colleagues in Texas and around the country suffer significant flood and wind damage.” GHF has never been a static society; it has always faced the challenges that arise from fulfilling its mission “to preserve the history, architecture, and maritime history of Galveston Island” with fervor. The Foundation’s response to Hurricane Ike demonstrates the true spirit of historic preservation in the twenty-first century — promoting the importance of the past, restoring historic structures for reuse, and revitalizing communities.

The story of how the Galveston Historical Foundation became a nationally known institution can help those who observe the hurricane recovery and GHF’s activism to understand the true spirit and scope of the city’s preservation movement. The work of Galveston’s early preservationists was not easy. Many born-on-the-island Galvestonians did not see the purpose of saving dilapidated houses and abandoned commercial buildings. They had to be persuaded and little-by-little GHF leaders succeeded and the movement found a foothold on the island. With the hiring of Peter Brink in 1973 and the establishment of a revolving fund to save commercial properties on the Strand, the Foundation began to seriously alter the island’s physical, cultural, and economic landscape. The work of the Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s was not easy, but it changed Galveston from a run-down, second-rate, beach town into a popular destination for historically minded tourists. It also helped begin the positive transformation that occurred in Galveston’s residential neighborhoods and inspired homeowners (of all economic backgrounds) to maintain their property. In short, Galveston looked to its past to create a future for a dying city, and it worked.

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8 “Q&A with the Leader of the Galveston Historical Foundation.”
9 Ibid.
Galveston, an island city fifty miles south of Houston, flourished during the nineteenth century as the only deep water port between New Orleans and Tampico, Mexico. Spanish explorer Jose de Evia named Galveston Bay in honor of viceroy of Mexico Bernardo de Galvez in 1785 and mapmakers assigned the name to the island as well. Used as a hunting and fishing ground by the Karankawa Indians, Galveston Island did not host a permanent European settlement until the early nineteenth century. Mexican revolutionary Louis Aury claimed the island for Mexico in 1816 and used it as a naval base for his operations against Spain. Pirate Jean Laffite established an outpost named Campeachy on the island in the late 1810s that grew to a population of about one thousand before the United States government stepped in and forced Laffite to vacate. As settlers began moving to Texas, Mexico established Galveston as an official port of entry in 1825 and set up a small custom house in 1830. The fledgling Texas Navy used Galveston as a base during the Texas Revolution, and after the war, Michael B. Menard and a group of nine investors (Samuel May Williams, Thomas F. McKinney, Mosely Baker, John K. Allen, Augustus C. Allen, William H. Jack, William Hardin, A.J. Gates, and David White) organized the Galveston City Company and began selling lots to individuals in April 1838. By the end of the year, over one hundred buildings had been built and sixty families had settled in the developing city.10

The Republic of Texas approved incorporation for Galveston in 1839, and the city grew prosperous as the port developed. In 1860 the Galveston, Houston, and Henderson Railroad connected the island to the mainland and boosted Galveston's role as an important cotton center. During the Civil War, the Union Navy imposed a naval blockade and residents fled the city, shutting down most businesses. The Union Army occupied the city for a period in 1862, but Confederate forces recaptured the island following the Battle of Galveston on January 1, 1863. Galvestonians returned to their homes and the city continued to expand rapidly. By 1870, Galveston, with 13,800 residents, was the most populous city in Texas. In the late nineteenth century Galveston was at its peak as the Queen City of the Gulf. The port, including related businesses such as merchants and banks, helped make Galveston the richest city in Texas. In 1870 eleven of the fifty-eight Texans worth $100,000 or more resided on the island. Almost thirty years later, as the twentieth century dawned, Galveston, measured by per capita income, was the second-wealthiest city in the United States. Its port ranked second in the nation for cotton exports and third for wheat exports. In addition, by 1899, fourteen steamship lines offered direct service to Europe and two lines traveled to Japan and Asia from the Island City. Galveston's wealth helped make it the most sophisticated city in the state, and it supported a variety of cultural, social, and religious organizations and events, including operas, plays, and concerts featuring top American talent. Galveston was also the first city in Texas to have electric lights and telephone service. The University of Texas opened Texas's first state-supported medical school on the island in October 1891. The city served as the point of entry for thousands of European immigrants. Although most moved inland throughout Texas and the region, these immigrants helped to
culturally diversify the population. In 1900 Galveston, with 38,000 residents, was no longer the most populous city in Texas — it had fallen to fourth, behind Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio. However, as Galveston historian David G. McComb describes:

Life in Galveston at the end of the century was full, human, pleasant and varied. The city possessed unusual charm, humor, maturity, and personality. Its climate and hazy sunshine produced a narcotic effect. Living was good. But Galveston existed on an edge, where nature’s two worlds met. It was unsafe. This fragile, beautiful city on the boarder was caught and crushed as once more the sea, with its voice howling and its heavy, rolling power unleashed, rose again to challenge its old adversary, the land.\footnote{McComb, 120.}

Disaster struck on September 8 and 9, 1900. A hurricane with estimated wind speeds of up to 120 miles-per-hour and a storm surge of up to fifteen feet pummeled the island. The storm killed over 6,000 of the 38,000 city residents and destroyed two-thirds of the structures. As Galveston historians Patricia Bellis Bixel and Elizabeth Hayes Turner write in their pictorial history of the event, \textit{Galveston and the 1900 Storm}, “In a fifteen-hour period, Galveston had gone from the commercial emporium of the state to the nation’s most tragic and demoralized city.”\footnote{Bixel and Turner, 33, 41.} The city famously mobilized, collected the massive numbers of dead, and literally dug out from the devastation. Galveston reorganized its city government to function more efficiently during this time of disaster and became the first city in the nation to adopt the commission form of government. Women’s organizations played a large role in the administration of relief services. As the 1900 Storm proved, Galveston, the city built on a sandbar, was extremely vulnerable to hurricanes. In light of the horrible devastation, the new city government embarked on a massive project to protect the city from future storms. Over a period of ten years, a six-
mile long, seventeen-foot high seawall was conceived and constructed along the gulf side of the east end of the island. The difficult part of the project was not the construction of the barrier but raising the grade of the land behind it so the city sloped downward towards the bay. When the project was complete in 1911, over 2,000 structures had been raised seventeen feet or less, depending on their distance from the seawall, the city’s entire infrastructure replaced, and more than 16 million cubic yards of sand moved from the floor of the Gulf of Mexico to the top of Galveston Island. The city of Galveston rebuilt after the 1900 Storm but never really recovered its past glory — economically or culturally. With the opening of the Houston Ship Channel in 1914 and the overall growth of Houston, Galveston’s prominence as Texas’s port city slipped away.

Historic preservation is one way Galvestonians sought to rehabilitate their dying city in the late twentieth century, and with GHF’s Strand revitalization, its maritime restoration of the Elissa, and other projects, Galveston became known as a success throughout preservation circles nationwide. The historic preservation movement has a long history in the United States, beginning with the saving of Independence Hall in Philadelphia from destruction in 1816 and the establishment in 1853 of the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association to protect the home of our nation’s first president, George Washington. The early movements have been explored by historians in terms of the study of women’s voluntary associations, nineteenth-century patriotism, and even sectionalism before and after the Civil War. But these works have not been truly

integrated into the larger historical narrative in the same way as other social and cultural reform movements have. Less has been written by historians on historic preservation in the twentieth century, however the developing field of the history of tourism does engage the history of historic preservation.\(^{14}\) Twentieth-century historic preservation literature is dominated by studies on how to preserve the landscape of the past and why we should save it from destruction, not the actual struggles of preservation leaders. Furthermore, in academia the history of historic preservation has been largely regulated to introductory classes in public history and historic preservation masters programs or architecture departments.\(^{15}\)

In the late 1980s active preservationist William J. Murtagh wrote *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* in an effort to educate preservationists about their own history.\(^{16}\) Murtagh believed that, for preservation to continue to succeed, the field must learn from its origins and study the victories and
loses. Case studies of local and regional preservation groups, such as those in New England, Virginia, Boston, Charleston, and San Antonio, emerged in the 1990s and attempted to establish each locale as an important preservation site and also to help answer Murtagh’s call. The 2004 essay collection *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States*, edited by Max Page and Randall Mason, took Murtagh’s explorations a step further and urged historians in all sub-fields to look at the preservation of buildings and places as a social reform movement with the power to reshape the urban and rural environment of the United States. Bringing historians and preservationists together to analyze how preservation has changed American cities is crucial to the future of the historic preservation movement.

This dissertation adds to the case studies that detail the history of historic preservation and rightfully places Galveston’s preservation history alongside those of Charleston, Boston, and New Orleans. The Galveston Historical Foundation’s history is significant within the national preservation story for several reasons. GHF was the first preservation non-profit to establish a revolving fund to save commercial properties. Its success in restoring the Strand historical district helped transform the island into a year-round tourist destination and boosted the island’s economy. The Foundation also mounted one of the most ambitious maritime restoration projects of any preservation organization with the transformation of the *Elissa*. The *Elissa* project secured the connection between the restoration of the “Wall Street of the Southwest” and Galveston’s

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history as a nineteenth-century port. GHF’s residential projects, many established in the early 1980s, worked with the community to make their island a more beautiful place for all, without forcing the relocation of low-income residents. The story of the Galveston Historical Foundation and historic preservation on the island is one characterized by hard work and dedication. Through comprehensive programs and the full utilization of available local, state, and federal resources, GHF used the city’s past to help reverse its decline and gave all residents a reason to have pride in their hometown once more.

This dissertation also places the role of historic preservation in Galveston’s historical narrative. Galveston is a popular topic for Texas historians; however, its preservation movement has not been studied from a historical standpoint. The historic preservation movement over the past thirty years has shaped the island into what it is today, but no one has traced the origins of this reform movement or studied it. This dissertation asks Texas historians to consider historic preservation as an agent of change and reveals the successes and struggles it has faced on the island — one of Texas’ most historic cities.

Now is a unique time as Galveston once again looks to rebuild and restore what once was. Residents can look to the struggles of their past for guidance and reassurance that it can be done. Certainly the multi-year effort of the islanders to rebuild following the devastating 1900 Storm can be re-examined, but as the Galveston Historical Foundation expands its work in the aftermath of Ike, islanders can also turn to the

19 In 1993 Rice University anthropology student Terri Alford Castaneda completed her dissertation, “Preservation and the Cultural Politics of the Past of Historic Galveston Island.” She examines the concept of cultural production by the Galveston Historical Foundation in the mid- to late-1980s. She takes issue with the idea of “Historic Galveston” purported by GHF and examines the difficult beach and historic tourism dichotomy. She spends little time on the history of GHF or the development of its programs. Terri Alford Castaneda, “Preservation and the Cultural Politics of the Past on Historic Galveston Island” (PhD diss., Rice University, 1993).
Foundation’s history as well. Preservationists, who once saved a decaying Galveston in the 1970s, have the opportunity to do it again in 2008.
Chapter 1
Early Historical Societies in Galveston

Until 2006 the letterhead of the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF) read, "Organized in 1871, Chartered and Incorporated 1954." GHF celebrated its 125th Anniversary in 1996 but also celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2004. It may seem odd that an organization would celebrate its 125th year before its 50th, but that, in a nutshell, illuminates the complex and somewhat irreverent relationship the island maintains with its history. The letterhead and its 125th Anniversary refer back to the first historical society organized in Galveston, the 1871 Historical Society of Galveston. Although early GHF lore would like both residents and tourists to believe that the Galveston Historical Foundation continually operated since 1871, it is hardly the case. GHF’s predecessor organizations held the attention of Galvestonians off and on for the past century, with interest waxing and waning based on the local economic and cultural climate and the lives of the limited membership base. The 1871 Historical Society of Galveston died out after a few years but revitalized in 1885. It withered again, however, and Galvestonians reorganized a third time in 1894 as the Texas Historical Society of Galveston. These early organizations differed from GHF in their missions and activities, but they all shared the basic goal of preserving Galveston and Texas history. These groups also illustrate the long-term dedication of Galvestonians to celebrate and protect their history.

Although GHF lore maintained that their organization was Texas’ oldest historical society, Galveston’s effort was not the first. The first efforts actually date to December 5, 1837, when twenty-six leaders of the Republic of Texas met in Houston at the Capitol building to organize the Philosophical Society of Texas. In the vein of the American
Philosophical Society organized by Benjamin Franklin in 1745, founder Mirabeau B. Lamar believed the newly independent Texas Republic should have a society to promote literary and scientific knowledge and study. At the first meeting, attended by Sam Houston, David G. Burnet, Thomas Rusk, and others, Lamar was elected president and Ashbel Smith, Robert A. Irion, Anson Jones, Joseph Rowe, and David S. Kaufman, vice-presidents. Lamar declared that the society’s specific goals in the Preamble to the society’s constitution:

We the undersigned form ourselves into a society for the collection and diffusion of knowledge . . . our object more especially at the present time is to concentrate the efforts of the enlightened and patriotic citizens of Texas, . . . in the collection and diffusion of correct information regarding the moral and social condition of our country; its finances, statistics and political and military history . . . .

A notice of the society and the officers appeared in the January 13, 1838, issue of the Houston Telegraph. The charter members and officers of the Philosophical Society were the leaders of early Texas, but, despite their best intentions, they had little time to spend collecting and preserving history — they simply were too busy creating it. After the Texas government moved to Austin in 1839, a notice requesting members to hold a second meeting of the society appeared in the Texas Sentinel on January 29, 1840. It is doubtful that many members attended, and nothing was recorded again in regards to the Philosophical Society of Texas until it was reorganized in the 1930s.²

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¹ June Hyer, “History Makers and the Preservers of the Philosophical Society of Texas,” in A History of the Philosophical Society of Texas, 1837-1987, compiled by Dorman Hayward Winfrey, (Austin: The Philosophical Society of Texas, 1987) 73-74; Richard B. McCaslin, At the Heart of Texas: 100 Years of the Texas State Historical Association (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2007) 3-5.
In 1854 another history-minded group met in the chapel of the Presbyterian school in Huntsville, Austin College, and they adopted the name the Texas Historic Society. Similar-minded Texans published a notice in the San Antonio Ledger in early May 1854 suggesting the formation of a state historical society prior to the deaths of Texas’ revolutionary heroes. Although San Antonio did not found a society, the Huntsville group met at least twice — one preliminary meeting and one business meeting. Little is known about the group; however, notice of the June 27, 1854, business meeting and the text of the group’s constitution appeared in the July 1, 1854, issue of the Texas Presbyterian, a weekly, four-page religious newspaper printed in Huntsville. On June 27 the Texas Historic Society appointed Austin College Professor A. E. Thom chair of the group, with Procter P. Porter serving as secretary. They adopted the constitution drafted by a committee chaired by W. A. Leigh and declared, “with a desire to collect and preserve records, relics, and other matter calculated to throw light on the past, present and prospective history of the country, this society is established and constitution ordained.” The constitution established an annual meeting to take place “the first Monday before the last Wednesday in June” and declared that the first meeting of the society would take place before June 1855. The men elected Thom president, Reverend Joseph G. Boone, vice president, Professor William C. Somerville, treasurer, Austin College Trustee Henderson Yoakum, corresponding secretary, and Colonel A. P. Wily, recording


Yoakum, an attorney and close friend of Sam Houston, had begun work on a history of Texas as early as 1849, and his two-volume *History of Texas from Its First Settlement in 1685 to Its Annexation to the United States in 1846* appeared in 1855. His text quickly became the authoritative narrative of early Texas history, a status it retained into the twentieth century.  

The society began by appointing a committee to examine the feasibility of collecting historical documents and artifacts and to invite Yoakum, Surgeon General and Diplomat Ashbel Smith, and District Attorney Thomas J. Jennings to speak at the next regular meeting. The men also declared publicly, “That all persons having in their possession facts relating to the history of our State are hereby very respectfully requested to communicate the same in writing to the President of the Texas State Historic Society, for Preservation.” They further added, “That all persons having specimens illustrating the geological and mineralogical formation of our State, be also invited to donate the same to said Society.” It is not known what happened to the Texas Historic Society of Huntsville except that it did not last and its lofty goals of collection went unmet.

On March 12, 1856, a letter from a citizen of Huntsville and an editorial appeared in Houston’s *Weekly Telegraph*. The man wrote, “Several attempts have been made in

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7 “State Historic Society.”
Texas to get up a Historical Society — but they have all failed for want of public spirit.”

He suggested Houston as the location for a permanent society, and the newspaper editor issued the call, writing:

We propose that a meeting of the citizens of this city, and such gentlemen from other parts of the State as can be induced to attend, who participate in feeling with us on this subject, shall be held, and the necessary measures taken before it is too late, to collect all the material which yet remains, and which should be preserved as part and parcel of the historical archives of the State.  

Once again, nothing came of this attempt to save Texas’ history and organize an enduring society. Later in the year, in the fall of 1856, a similar plea appeared in the Texas State Times by editor, John S. “Rip” Ford, but again the summons went unanswered. It seemed as if the spirit was willing, but the collective body was weak — or simply consumed by more pressing current affairs.

Somewhat later, historic mindedness took root in Galveston on August 3, 1871. That day, a dozen prominent Galveston men met at the law offices of Marcus C. McLemore and Francis Charles Hume in the Ballinger & Jack Building on the corner of 22nd and Post Office. These men recognized the importance of Texas history to the larger nation, believed it to be “filled with shining examples of human activity, and notable records of virtue and of crime,” and declared their intention to support the organization of a historical society. They realized that the scattered documents and historical materials related to significant Texas events needed to be collected in a single location to guarantee their long-term preservation. They adopted the constitution and by-laws of the New- 

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8 “Texas Historical Society, Editorial,” The Weekly Telegraph, March 12, 1856, Box 2L445, TSHA Papers and Texas Historic Society Subject File, GTHC.
9 McCaslin, 5.
10 Reminiscences of the Texas Republic, Historical Society of Galveston Series, No. 1, Galveston Historical Society Papers MS#78-0003 (hereafter cites as GHS Papers), GTHC.
York Historical Society as their own and agreed upon the name “The Historical Society of Galveston.”

The men quickly elected permanent officers, with Dr. Samuel M. Welch as president, merchant Cyrus Thompson as vice-president, attorney Charles Hume as treasurer, and attorney Dozier Herbert as secretary. Welch declined the presidency, and the position remained vacant until 1872, when Alfred M. Hobby, a former politician and merchant, agreed to serve. At the same time, Albert Stein took over as treasurer.

Herbert later claimed the idea for the Galveston Society as his own, writing in an 1884 letter:

Ever since I been a man free to decide upon my own plans of usefulness among others, I entertained when soon after the war, I came to this state the intention of inaugurating a historical society of our Texas. Foursome time early in the summer of 1871, I canvassed the topic with a number of Galveston’s most intelligent and prominent men.

Initially the 1871 Society occupied itself with collecting records, holding meetings (occasionally reported on by the Galveston News), and hosting historical lectures for the public (ladies included). The infrequent public lectures in the first few years of the society primarily featured Galvestonians, but in 1873 expanded to include a distinguished guest from Brenham, Methodist minister Homer S. Thrall, who spoke on the early history of Texas to a large audience “composed of the most intellectual ladies

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11 By 1871, the New-York Historical Society, founded in 1804, had developed into one of the leading historical associations in the nation. The group had amassed a large collection including manuscripts, maps, works of art, and scientific and historic objects and published books and pamphlets documenting its holdings and lectures presented to the society. The society had also published its constitution and by-laws. Walter Muir Whitehill, “The New-York Historical Society,” in *Independent Historical Societies: An enquiry into their research and publication functions and their financial future* (Boston: The Boston Athenæum, 1962): 38-64.

12 Dozier Herbert to George W. Grover, March 10, 1884, Box 2H84, Philip Crosby Tucker III Papers, CAH; “Reminiscences of the Texas Republic.”

13 Herbert to Grover, March 10, 1884, Box 2H84, Tucker Papers, CAH.
and gentlemen of the city.”14 Thrall had already published *A History of Methodism in Texas* and would go on to publish *A History of Texas* in 1876, *A Pictorial History of Texas* in 1879 and *The People's Illustrated Almanac, Texas Handbook, and Immigrants' Guide* in 1880.15 After Thrall raised the bar for the society’s public programming, Ashbel Smith, a pioneer physician, medical educator, co-founder of the Philosophical Society of Texas, and Vice-President of the Southern Historical Society, followed with “reminiscences of his long continued connection with public affairs of the Republic and State of Texas.”16 He spoke on December 15, 1875, and the lecture was so well received that the society decided to publish it as the first pamphlet in the “Galveston Historical Society Series.”17 Although this pamphlet is the only publication in the series, it documents and legitimates the work of the society. Not only were these men educating Galvestonians in public speeches, but the society created a historical record that they intended to disseminate to libraries and scholars around the nation.

The 86-page pamphlet, *Reminiscences of the Texas Republic*, appeared in 1876 and included the revised text of Smith’s speech combined with a notice of the society, its members, collecting aims, and “most notable objects in its collection.” The group boasted twenty-five regular members, and its membership roll read like a who’s-who of Galveston and nineteenth-century Texas. Included were such prominent figures as William Pitt Ballinger, James Moreau Brown, Guy M. Bryan, Thomas M. Jack, Henry

16 Dozier Herbert to Ashbel Smith, September 10, 1875, Box 2G225, Ashbel Smith Papers, CAH.
17 Dozier Herbert to Ashbel Smith, December 18, 1875, Box 2G225, Ashbel Smith Papers, CAH; “Historical Society,” *Galveston Daily News*, January 16, 1876; “Reminiscences of the Texas Republic.”
Rosenberg, and John and George Sealy. In the pamphlet, the Historical Society of Galveston declared:

It is the aim of the society to receive and preserve manuscripts, printed matter, maps, and all objects that may serve to illustrate the general history of Texas, and of localities and events therein. However slight and unimportant a single letter, printed sheet, or object possessing historical interest may seem to be when considered singly; it acquired a new value when placed in position with other links in the chain of testimony to which it may properly belong. Private letters, memoranda, old newspapers, and pamphlets of little or no apparent value, always throw some light on their contemporary times.\(^{18}\)

By 1876 the society's collection consisted of various materials, including some noteworthy holdings: the papers of Lorenzo de Zavala, the first vice-president of the Republic; a two-volume manuscript narrative of the Meir Expedition written by one of its members; a narrative of the capture of Santa Anna; newspapers from Texas, the United States, and other nations; and maps of Texas and the surrounding region.\(^{19}\) The society also collected objects, such as the so-called "Alamo Bell," donated in 1874. The bell actually was not from the Alamo but instead appears to have been taken from a tree near the Mission Concepción shortly after the October 28, 1835, battle.\(^{20}\) The society welcomed donations of all kinds from all over the state and country, announcing new acquisitions via notices in the newspaper. Although it focused on the collection of Texas-affiliated materials, donations were not always related to the state or even the

\(^{18}\) "Reminisces of the Texas Republic."
\(^{19}\) Ibid.
\(^{20}\) J.S. Sullivan to N.B. Yard, June 15, 1888, Box 2H87, Tucker Papers, CAH; Thomas W. Taylor to J.S. Sullivan, May 21, 1888, Box 2H87, Tucker Papers, CAH; J.S. Sullivan to N.B. Yard, April 16, 1888, Box 2H87, Tucker Papers, CAH.
United States. In 1881, for example, Dr. Moreau Brown donated a javelin and armor from a South African Zulu warrior.²¹

The society always intended for its collection to be utilized by historians. At a meeting in September 1874, members passed a resolution, later published in the *Galveston News*, stating “that the facilities of the Historical Society of Galveston, and of its members, be hereby tendered to all persons desiring to make investigations into matters of Texas history; and that the society will gladly assist any person desiring to address the public on subjects pertinent to its organizations.”²² Apparently, the society answered several requests for materials during the next year since, at the September 1875 meeting, members agreed to refuse requests from researchers living in the Texas “interior” who wished to physically remove materials from the archive and the island. Members declared the historical items would stay in Galveston for fear they would be lost and dispersed across the state, thereby undermining their primary goal of assembling a collection of historical value.²³

Dozier Herbert supervised the archive as custodian until he left Galveston in 1883. He hoped that the society would focus almost exclusively on building the collection, and he envisioned that, eventually, the group would build “a cheap small one-story brick [building], for an everlasting repository of our archives.”²⁴ Herbert also wanted the society (like other leading historical groups) to publish edited volumes of its holdings for use by students and historians. According to Herbert, few members shared his vision, and after the first several years of the organization’s existence, he alone was

²⁴ Herbert to Grover, March 10, 1884, Box 2H84, Tucker Papers, CAH.
left to tend to the storage and arrangement of the archives. It is ironic, therefore, that he was later to be blamed for the collection’s near loss. In a letter Herbert wrote from San Marcos to society member George W. Grover in 1884, he described how, before leaving the city, he carefully worked for two weeks on arranging the archive and locating “a dry, safe, and good place in which to store them in perfect security.” Herbert mused, “I have nursed those archives for 12 years with the care that a mother would give an only infant” and declared the records “perfectly safe” at George M. Steirer’s warehouse on Mechanic Street. Herbert also made clear his intention to return to Galveston and resume his position as the society’s secretary and archival custodian. But Herbert never made it back to Galveston, and shortly after completing the ten-page letter, he entered the state asylum in Austin, where he died. The records remained safe for the time being.25

At the time Herbert wrote his letter in 1884, the Historical Society of Galveston was effectively inactive. The group met infrequently throughout its thirteen year existence, and the first group of elected officers served only until sometime in 1877, when English-born merchant James M. Walthew assumed the presidency.26 In the 1878-1879 city directory, the society listed new officers and acknowledged meetings on the second Saturday of each month. Asa H. Willie was named president, Guy M. Bryan vice-president, Dozier Herbert secretary, and James S. Montgomery treasurer.27 At the time, Willie had served as an associate justice of the Texas Supreme Court and as a Texas

25 Ibid.
26 Philip C. Tucker, Jr. to A. Howard Clarks, August 8, 1893, GHS Papers.
27 Heller’s Galveston Directory, 1878-1879. It is questionable how much time Bryan spent on Historical Society matters, considering he did not attend the meeting where he was elected president and was notified by mail afterwards. Dozier Herbert to Guy M. Bryan, January 21, 1878, Guy M. Bryan Papers, CAH.
Representative in the U.S. Congress. Bryan, the nephew of Stephen F. Austin, served in both the Texas State Legislature and Senate and also the U.S. House of Representatives. He co-founded the Texas Veterans' Association in 1873, and at the time of his vice-presidency in the Historical Society, Bryan worked as an attorney in partnership with his brother-in-law, William Pitt Ballinger. A widower, Bryan lived with his young children at the Ballinger home. The British-born Montgomery worked in real estate and insurance and was recognized as a pioneer citizen of the city.

The Historical Society of Galveston is not listed in the 1880-1881 or the 1881-1882 city directories but returned in the 1882-1883 edition. The listing reads, “Galveston Historical Society — Organized August 3, 1871. Membership 26. Meetings Subject to Call,” and names Willie, Bryan, and Herbert as officers. No treasurer is named. The society held its last publicized meeting on March 4, 1882. Most of the members lost interest due to personal or business reasons; several had died, and others had moved from Galveston. The society languished until a crisis brought it into the minds of interested former members.

In 1885 George M. Steirer’s warehouse, the “perfectly safe” storage facility where Dozier Herbert had left the group’s archive, placed an ad in the Galveston News that the collections of the Historical Society would be disposed of if the storage fee was not paid. Realizing immediate action was necessary if the collection was to be

31 *Morrison and Formy's General Directory of the City of Galveston, 1882-1883*, GTHC.
persevered, members Philip Crosby Tucker, Jr., Andrew Benner, and Nahor B. Yard met on October 3, 1885, to craft a plan of action. Tucker, born in Vermont, had moved to Galveston in 1852 to establish his law practice. In 1858 he purchased the home of Samuel May Williams at 3601 Avenue P from Williams's widow. Tucker introduced the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry to Texas in 1867 and dedicated much of his life to the movement. Yard had moved to Galveston in 1838 and operated a tailoring business and men's clothing store. He served on Galveston's first board of aldermen and was considered a leading citizen. Yard also was a leading Freemason and served on the board of the local lodge for over thirty-eight years. At the 1885 meeting, Benner, the janitor at Ball High School and an early member of the Texas Veterans' Association, announced that he had spoken to Steirer regarding the archive and had given notice of the meeting to all the former society members he could locate. The three men took it upon themselves to reorganize the society and declared that members had to make themselves known as active participants within thirty days or risk being made honorary members "barred from any active participation in the business of the society." They also elected a new slate of leaders with Tucker as president and Benner secretary. Benner, Tucker, Yard, Thomas Conyngton, and James M. Fendley comprised the new board of trustees. At the time Conyngton operated a business college, and Fendley was principal of the 3rd District

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33 Minutes of the Galveston Historical Society 1885-1888, Box 2H87 (hereafter cited as GHS Minutes), Tucker Papers, CAH.
36 GHS Minutes, Tucker Papers, CAH.
School (later renamed the Goliad School). These five men met again October 17, where Benner reported paying Steirer $15 for storage. Benner and Tucker also reclaimed society materials from George G. Grover, who, as a responsible member of the 1871 Society, had been collecting materials mailed to the association. With the permission of the Galveston schools superintendent, Grover placed the materials in the Ball High School library room for safekeeping.

Although the 1885 Society’s minutes state that the men intended to meet later in the month, the next meeting recorded was not until March 24, 1888. In the meantime, Tucker and Benner continued to work on behalf of the society. They sent out notices stating the group’s desire to continue collecting manuscripts, books, and pamphlets and to correspond with other historical societies. Benner placed the collection in the library of Ball High School in early 1886 and, in November, the Galveston News printed a brief history of the society and a selected list of items in the collection. The article closed by stating, “If the nucleus already collected by the Galveston Historical Society were made a matter of more interest, it might grow to be very valuable in the eyes of the historian and probably eventually bring out something which would be worth giving to the world in print, as a contribution to the history of Texas.” Despite this early promise, it would take many more years before the collection developed into one of significant use.

The March 24, 1888, meeting turned out to be the society’s last regular gathering, and they announced the Alamo Bell — missing since Dozier Herbert’s guardianship —

37 City Directory of Galveston, 1886-87.
38 GHS Minutes, Tucker Papers, CAH; George W. Grover to W.M. Crow, 1885, Box 2H87, Tucker Papers, CAH; Philip C. Tucker to George W. Grover, 1885, Box 2H87, Tucker Papers, CAH.
39 GHS Minutes, Tucker Papers, CAH.
40 “Objects of collection Desired,” Box 2H87, Tucker Papers, CAH.
had been found. The society also admitted three new members at this meeting, indicating that they expected to continue semi-regular gatherings.\textsuperscript{42} Benner died June 8, 1888, and Tucker appointed his own son, Philip Crosby Tucker III, as secretary-treasurer.\textsuperscript{43} In January 1889 the younger Tucker removed the society's collection from Ball High School and placed it in the law office he shared with his father at the Masonic Temple.\textsuperscript{44} The archive grew sparingly during this period, and the society returned the papers and diaries of Lorenzo de Zavala to his daughter, Adina, upon her request in the summer of 1889.\textsuperscript{45} After society members Nahor B. Yard and James S. Sullivan died in 1889, the group ceased to exist in anything but name only.\textsuperscript{46}

In fact, despite a collection of more than 1,600 items and a haphazard scattering of meetings, perhaps the 1885 Society always existed only on paper. In March 1893 the Tuckers exchanged a letter in which they revealed that most of the members recorded in the society records were actually unaware of their membership — their names proposed and voted upon without their knowledge. The two Tuckers considered only James Fendley and Thomas Conynyton genuine members, but, as the younger Tucker remarked, “They have never been of practical benefit.”\textsuperscript{47}

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\textsuperscript{42} GHS Minutes, Tucker Papers, CAH.
\textsuperscript{43} Philip C. Tucker III to E.G. Littlejohn, December 17, 1901, Box 1, GHS Papers.
\textsuperscript{45} Adina de Zavala to Secretary of the Galveston Historical Society, June 4, 1889, Box 2H84, Tucker Papers, CAH; A. de Zavala for L. de Zavala to the President or Secretary of the Galveston Historical Society, June 22, 1889, Box 2H84, Tucker Papers, CAH; A. de Zavala to P. C. Tucker Jr., July 16, 1889, Box 2H84, Tucker Papers, CAH; P.C. Tucker Jr., to A. de Zavala, August 20, 1889, Box 2H84, Tucker Papers, CAH; A. de Zavala to P.C. Tucker Jr., August 2, 1889, Box 2H84, Tucker Papers, CAH. The Zavala family later donated them to the TSHA.
\textsuperscript{46} GHS Minutes, Tucker Papers, CAH.
\textsuperscript{47} Philip C. Tucker III to Philip C. Tucker Jr., March 25, 1893, Box 8, Philip Crosby Tucker Jr. Papers MS#77-0003, GTHC.
\end{flushleft}
The elder Philip Crosby Tucker died in Washington, D.C., on July 9, 1894, and a month later the historical society held its first meeting in six years. At the Ball High School office of Dr. Oscar H. Cooper, superintendent of Galveston Public Schools, the younger Tucker called the August 1, 1894, meeting of the Galveston Historical Society to order at 4 P.M. James Fendley served as secretary. Tucker and Fendley elected Cooper, Lucian Minor, Farrell Minor, Thomas J. Ballinger, and Henry M. Trueheart members, but of the new members only Cooper and Lucian Minor actually attended the meeting. Brothers Lucian and Farrell Minor had moved to Galveston from Virginia after the Civil War. Lucian worked at the firm of his cousin, Henry M. Trueheart, who had moved to Galveston in 1845 and served as the county tax assessor for ten years prior to the Civil War. After the war, Trueheart ran a real estate business and served on the city’s school board. Ballinger, the son of William Pitt Ballinger, worked as an attorney. The men agreed to meet three days later, to reorganize and reestablish the historical society.48

The subsequent meeting took place August 4, 1894, again in the office of Dr. Cooper. The members elected Cooper chairman and Fendley secretary, and they admitted several new members, including Robert G. Street, Elbridge G. Littlejohn, and Rabbi Henry Cohen.49 Street, who had moved to Galveston in 1867, worked as an attorney and also represented Galveston in the Texas Senate. Littlejohn, a native Texan and lifelong friend of Fendley, had moved to Galveston in 1883 and in 1894 served as principal of the Alamo School.50 London-born Cohen had moved to the island in 1888 to

48 Minutes Texas Historical Society of Galveston, 1894-1931 (hereafter cited as THS Minutes), Box 1, GHS Papers, GTHC; “Galveston Historical Society,” Galveston Daily News, August 2, 1894.
49 The name of the fourth man admitted to membership is illegible. THS Minutes, GHS Papers.
lead the Temple B'nai Israel. In time, Cohen would become one of Galveston's most beloved leaders as he worked tirelessly to aid those in need, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.51

The men renamed the group "The Texas Historical Society of Galveston" and agreed to prepare a charter. The earlier Historical Society of Galveston dedicated itself to the preservation and promotion of Texas history and sought donations from around the state, but it remained an island-themed venture in name. In 1894, however, the men hoped to revitalize the society by declaring publicly their intention to preserve the history of the entire state. Texas did not have a statewide organization dedicated to preservation of history at the time, and it seemed logical that Galveston, the most significant nineteenth-century Texas city, would assume that role.52

Members held a third meeting a week later, on August 11, to elect a board of directors and hear Robert Street present an address on the society's intent to preserve the unique history of Texas and collect additional materials for the existing archive. James B. Stubbs and Major E. M. Hastick became members. The society elected Cooper, Street, Lucian Minor, Fendley, Stubbs, Grover, and Littlejohn to the board of directors. They designated Minor treasurer, and he became responsible for collecting annual dues of $1 from each member.53 Street's speech on the goals of the new society appeared the following day in the Galveston News. In it he wrote:

53 THS Minutes, GHS Papers.
Hence it is that in the formal incorporation of this society its purposes are declared to be: The collection and preservation of relics and documents pertaining to the early settlement and subsequent development of Texas, its laws, its social, civil, religious, and military institutions, the elucidation of obscure and doubtful data connected therewith, and the promotion of love of civil and religious freedom by keeping in living memory through discussion, and the contribution of papers, the glorious deeds of the fathers of the republic.

The early history of Texas is unique. Successively a colony of Spain, a Mexican state, an independent republic and a state of the American union, it was settled by a people who, not more by their valor than by the influence of superiority of race in mental and physical vigor, and an irrepressible desire to be free and independent, at an early period and against overwhelming numerical odds and seemingly insurmountable physical obstacles, dominated and mastered the owners of the soil and gave to the world the spectacle of the present wonderful development and unmeasured future possibilities of Texas.

This society as the successor of the Galveston historical society founded in 1871, has already a valuable collection of documents and memorials for which space has been granted in the library of Ball high school. It is contemplated to seek permanent lodging in the library building to be erected and the provisions of the will of the late philanthropist, Henry Rosenberg, who was himself a member of the original society. Contributions to the collection are solicited with the assurances of their safe custody and careful preservation. The name of the donors will in all cases be duly registered and their donations properly accredited.

We invite all the sons and daughters of Texas to whom these sentiments appeal to join with us in this labor, this pressure, this duty of love to an honorable past, this effort through the preservation of the memory of a great and glorious past to perpetuate the blessings we enjoy, to reap the fruits of the seed sown by the fathers and contribute to the welfare of mankind.54

The new historical society had lofty ideas for its future and sought support from Galvestonians who shared their romantic vision of Texas history.

54 "Historical Society holds a meeting fraught with interest to all interested in Texas History," Galveston Daily News, August 12, 1894.
The state approved a formal charter for the Texas Historical Society of Galveston in late October 1894. The documents listed the purpose of the group simply as “the collection and preservation of whatever may relate to the history, antiquities and literature of Texas.”\(^55\) The group’s constitution consisted of six articles, with Article Five openly appealing to women: “Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed as excluding ladies from membership in this Society.”\(^56\) It would not be until the February 1895 meeting that the first women, Miss Bettie Ballinger, Miss Lucy Quarls, and Mrs. Maria C. Kimball, applied for membership. Ballinger and Kimball helped found the distinguished Galveston ladies’ literary society, the Wednesday Club. Ballinger, the sister of member Thomas J. Ballinger, also co-founded the Daughters of the Republic of Texas in 1891. That she would be one of the first female members of the historical society is no surprise.\(^57\)

The Texas Historical Society of Galveston elected its first slate of officers at the November 1894 meeting — Cooper as president, Street as vice-president, James S. Montgomery as secretary, Lucian Minor as Treasurer, Cohen as Custodian, and Philip Crosby Tucker III as assistant custodian. Tucker agreed to transport the archives of the defunct Historical Society of Galveston to the new Texas Historical Society with the caveat that if the new society ever failed to exist the collection would return to him. He formally transferred the archive on December 1 from his office to newly prepared cases at Ball High School.\(^58\)

\(^{55}\) “Constitution and By-Laws of the Texas Historical Society,” 1895, Box 1, GHS Papers.
\(^{56}\) Ibid.
\(^{58}\) THS Minutes, GHS Papers; Philip C. Tucker III to E.G. Littlejohn, December 17, 1901, Box 1, GHS Papers.
As an intellectual debut for the historical society, the members prepared a formal symposium held Tuesday, January 29, 1895, in the Ball High School auditorium. Five papers were presented to "a large and receptive audience": "The Alamo Bell" by Philip Tucker; "LaSalle in Texas" by Clarence N. Ousley, editor of the *Galveston Tribune*; "History of Texas Education" by Oscar Cooper; "Some Historical Jewish Characters in Texas" by the Rabbi Henry Cohen; and "The Tejas Nation" by Mrs. Lee C. Harby. Harby had previously presented her paper at a meeting of the American Historical Society and was a friend of Rabbi Cohen. The *Galveston News* reported that the symposium "was enjoyed by many of the best citizens of Galveston" and printed the text of all five papers.59

At the regular monthly meetings of the society, members and guest speakers presented essays on topics of Texas history, and the group addressed concerns with the collection. Many people — members and non-members, Galvestonians and non-Galvestonians — continued to donate historical materials to the society, and in February 1895 society president Cooper put forward the suggestion that the society ask for permanent storage in the Rosenberg Library, then under construction.60 Little came of Cooper's request, and the collection remained in the Ball High School library. Cooper resigned as both superintendent of schools and president of the society in 1896.61 In October 1896 the group met in the Ball High office of the new superintendent, J. W. Hopkins, and named Rabbi Henry Cohen president pro-tem. Cohen reported that he


61 Cooper went on to serve as the president of Baylor College in Waco and Simmons College in Abilene and was a leader in the field of education in Texas. *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Cooper, Oscar Henry," http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/CC/fco60.html (assessed November 18, 2008).
would make a catalogue of the archive, and a discussion about the storage of the society's historic holdings ensued. At the time, members believed that the new city library, funded by the estate of Henry Rosenberg, would be completed within a year, and assumed the collection could be stored there.\textsuperscript{62} Cohen raised the question again at the February 8, 1897, meeting, and he suggested that the archive be moved to the city's existing public library in the Masonic Temple so that members and researchers could have better access to the materials. The group agreed to form two committees — one to confer with the Rosenberg estate about securing space in the new library and one to address the city council about securing a room in the current library. The city council granted permission, and the archive returned to the Temple later that spring.\textsuperscript{63}

The Texas Historical Society of Galveston flourished between 1895 and 1897. It met regularly at Ball High School, and attendance averaged around eight members. At the annual meeting in 1896, treasurer Lucian Minor reported thirty-three dues-paying members and thirteen members with delinquent dues accounts.\textsuperscript{64} As with the earlier Historical Society of Galveston, however, historical curiosity and an active membership could not be sustained over the long-term. The group elected new officers in November 1896, selecting Robert G. Street as president; John C. Walker, vice-president; Lucian Minor, treasurer; Eldridge G. Littlejohn, secretary; Rabbi Henry Cohen, custodian; and John C. Tucker III, assistant custodian. After the society moved the archive from Ball


\textsuperscript{63} "Several Valuable Relics," \textit{Galveston Daily News}, February 9, 1897; THS Minutes, GHS Papers.

\textsuperscript{64} "Annual Report of the Treasurer of the Texas Historical Society for year ending November 9, 1896,” Box 1, GHS Papers.
High to the public library and reported them safe at the May 10, 1897, meeting, the
members did not convene again until November 21, 1898.65

The society attempted to restructure and refocus members’ attention back to
historical matters following the eighteen month hiatus. They met at the rooms of the
public library in the Masonic Temple on November 21, 1898, and appointed a committee
to revise the constitution and by-laws. They also agreed “[t]o petition [the] City Council
to donate to the Society certain historical material now in possession of [the] public
library.” The men elected new officers — Walker as president and Dr. Allen J. Smith as
vice-president — and reelected the four other officers to their positions. Smith had
moved to Galveston in 1891 from his native Pennsylvania to be the first professor of
pathology and bacteriology at the newly opened University of Texas Medical Branch.66
The society met four times in 1899, and at the January meeting revised the constitution so
that only three members (a reduction from seven) would constitute a quorum at regular
meetings of the society. After the May 8, 1899, meeting, the organization went dormant
for two years.

Part of the reason for that dormancy, of course, was the devastating hurricane that
struck Galveston on September 8 and 9, 1900. The storm destroyed nearly two-thirds of
the city’s buildings and killed at least 6,000 of the city’s 38,000 residents, including the
Texas Historical Society of Galveston’s treasurer, Lucian Minor. The Galveston storm
remains today the deadliest natural disaster in United States history.67 Surprisingly, the
historical archive managed to largely survive, although a number of papers and books

65 THS Minutes, GHS Papers.
66 Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. “Smith, Allen John,”
67 For additional information on the 1900 Hurricane, see Patricia Bellis Bixel and Elizabeth Hayes Turner,
Galveston and the 1900 Storm: Catastrophe and Catalyst (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000).
were lost and/or damaged after the storm destroyed the roof of the Masonic Temple. In the aftermath of that unspeakable tragedy, the society’s secretary, Elbridge G. Littlejohn, worked diligently to collect and secure the damaged archival materials. As the twentieth century dawned and Galveston leaders faced the daunting task of rebuilding their city after the horrific hurricane, interest in historic matters waned once more. The society met only eight times over the next thirty years and did so only to formally deal with issues related to the storage of the collection.

On December 13, 1901, Elbridge G. Littlejohn and Rabbi Henry Cohen called a meeting of the society, attended by James M. Fendley, James T. Huffmaster, and William C. Ogilvy, to discuss the future of the archive. The pressing item of business: correspondence over the prior two months between Littlejohn, Phillip C. Tucker III, and the Texas State Historical Association regarding the collection. The impetus of the 1901 meeting had its roots in February 1897, when a group of ten met on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin to discuss the organization of a state historical society. They agreed to host an organizational meeting for all interested Texans on March 2, and they sent 250 invitations to people with a known interest throughout the state. The Texas Historical Society of Galveston, however, already existed, but the framers of the Austin group apparently did not recognize their counterpart’s mission. Judge Zachary Taylor Fulmore sent a letter to Littlejohn, then secretary of the Galveston society, on

68 "Texas Historical Society of Galveston: Questions received from Dr. Charles W. Ramsdell," August 1924, Box 1, GHS Papers.
69 THS Minutes, GHS Papers.
70 Ibid.
71 "Organization of the Association," Texas Historical Association Quarterly 1, no. 1 (July 1897): 71-4; Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "Texas State Historical Association," http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/TT/vtt6.html (accessed November 18, 2008); For an extended discussion on the founding of the Texas State Historical Association and its history, see Richard B. McCaslin, At the Heart of Texas: 100 Years of the Texas State Historical Association, 1897-1997 (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 2007).
behalf of those organizing the Austin contingent. Upon receiving the letter, Littlejohn responded in a seething note, informing Fulmore that the Galveston Society was in fact a state organization, not simply a local one. Littlejohn wrote:

We would not think for a moment of giving up our name nor would we be willing to 'co-operate as a member of the state organization.' As an independent state organization, we will be pleased to co-operate with you on any 'progressive and practical work on the lines of Texas history' that you may inaugurate.

As a 'state organization' is already in existence you and the gentlemen who met with you, are cordially invited to become members of the same.\footnote{E. G. Littlejohn to Judge Zachary Taylor Fulmore, February 20, 1897, Box 2L424, TSHA Papers.}

The state society did little in response. However, in a letter to TSHA secretary Professor George P. Garrison of Austin, TSHA vice-president Dudley Wooten, stated:

The attitude of the Galveston Society, if hostile, will be unfortunate and wholly unwarranted, but not surprizing to me. That little community has all the insular pretensions and prejudices of England without its civilization and culture, and I have never known any kind of convention in Texas that it did not assume the role of exclusive and arrogant leadership. It ought to be given to understand in the outset that the State Historical Society is not dependent upon it for success or support, although we would greatly appreciate the cordial co-operation of the Society that has done such good work there. I do not know of any special reason why Galveston should seek to monopolize the field of historical research and collection in Texas. Certainly its own history has not been sufficiently important in connection with early or recent Texas development to warrant any such claims; on the contrary some of its episodes could be quite profitably and creditable omitted from the annals of Texas civilization. However, I think we ought to avoid any antagonism by refusing to recognize any reason for it, and invite the organization and co-operation of as many local Societies as possible.\footnote{Dudley G. Wooten to George P. Garrison, March 7, 1897, Box 2L424, TSHA Papers.}
Philip C. Tucker III sought membership in the Texas State Historical Association in 1901.74 Living in Austin and aware that the Galveston society had not met in two years, Tucker wrote to Littlejohn and suggested that the Texas Historical Society of Galveston members donate their archives to the TSHA. Littlejohn, his previous animosity apparently dissipated, agreed and stated that he would draw up an agreement for the group’s members to sign. He expected that everyone would agree, with the exception of the society’s president, John C. Walker.75

Littlejohn wrote to the TSHA secretary on November 6, 1901, giving notice that he was attempting to gain authorization from the remaining Galveston members for the transfer of the Galveston archive to Austin. He requested that the TSHA pay for the transportation of the collection and that it be known as the “Texas Historical Society Collection.” He also asked that the officers of the Galveston society be granted lifetime memberships in the TSHA.76

Tucker wrote to George R. Garrison, recording secretary and librarian of the TSHA, on November 14 regarding Littlejohn’s plan to donate the Galveston archive. He asserted, “As I am owner through funds advanced, of the major portion of the collection, and the association in Galveston only hold them as a loan from me. They are not in his hands....” Tucker stated that decisions about the archive should be left to three men: its custodian, Rabbi Cohen; Tucker as assistant custodian, and Walker as president of the

74 P.C. Tucker III to Lester G. Bugbee, June 27, 1901, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers; P.C. Tucker III to L.G. Bugbee, October 1, 1901, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers.
75 E.G. Littlejohn to P.C. Tucker III, October 26, 1901, copy, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers.
76 E.G. Littlejohn to Secretary, Texas State Historical Society, November 6, 1901, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers.
society. As secretary, Littlejohn did not have any control. Tucker closed his letter with the wish that the collection be donated to the state society.\footnote{77}{P.C. Tucker III to George P. Garrison, November 14, 1901, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers.}

Society president Walker wrote to Tucker on November 19 and expressed his desire that the archive be left in Galveston. Shortly thereafter, Littlejohn notified Garrison that he must “call off the negotiations” for the transfer.\footnote{78}{John C. Walker to P.C. Tucker III, November 19, 1901, copy, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers; E.G. Littlejohn to G.P. Garrison, December 3, 1901, copy, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers.} But Garrison did not easily give up. He asked Tucker if, as trustee of the collection, he could take action on behalf of the TSHA.\footnote{79}{G.P. Garrison to P.C. Tucker III, December 6, 1901, copy, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers.} Tucker responded that although he wished the archive would be moved to Austin, he could not go against the wishes of the Galveston society.\footnote{80}{P.C. Tucker III to G.P. Garrison, December 8, 1901, Box 2L425, TSHA Papers.}

With negotiations coming to a head, the Texas Historical Society of Galveston formally addressed the situation at the December 13, 1901, meeting. The five members present appointed Cohen, Huffmaster, and Littlejohn to a committee with the power to act for the preservation of the historical collection. In light of the correspondence with Tucker and his asserted claim of trusteeship on the archive, the group agreed “[t]hat the secretary [Littlejohn] be instructed to communicate with member Tucker relating to the present condition of the Society and as to his rights in the archives and his willingness to waive any rights that he may thus have.”\footnote{81}{THS Minutes, GHS Papers.} In a lengthy letter, Tucker resisted giving up control of the archive if it meant that the Galveston society could simply dispose of the collection as it wished. Instead, he suggested (again) that, in light of the fact that for thirty years a historical society had tried and failed to maintain the interest of Galvestonians, the collection be donated to the Texas State Historical Association and
housed at the University of Texas. The parties reached no resolution, and the archive remained in Galveston. When the Rosenberg Library opened finally in 1904, the society placed its beleaguered archive into the building’s fireproof vaults where the collection would be safe from theft, fire, hurricanes, and general neglect.

Texas Historical Society members met a year later at the Rosenberg Library, on November 27, 1905, with the intention of reactivating once more. New officers were elected, with Walker continuing as president, James M. Fendley elected vice-president, and Littlejohn reelected as secretary-treasurer. The election of archival custodian was deferred to the next meeting. Littlejohn agreed to send a mailing to any Galvestonians who might be interested in membership, and notice of the meeting appeared in the Galveston News. At the ensuing meeting, on March 8, 1906, the six members present elected Littlejohn secretary-custodian, Cohen assistant custodian, and H.W.D. Langston treasurer. They met again June 4, 1906, and historical papers were presented to a crowd of ten. Despite this brief resurgence, the group also floundered and little occurred in the name of the society for the next fifteen years.

In the fall of 1919, the collection of the Texas Historical Society of Galveston and its storage again served as an impetus to draw members together. Charles W. Ramsdell, Professor of American History at the University of Texas, had written various societies and individuals around the state, soliciting their historical collections for donation to the university’s library. Littlejohn, of course, received one such letter. Ramsdell corresponded with Tucker, who had moved to Vermont, in 1917 regarding the Galveston

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82 P.C. Tucker III to E.G. Littlejohn, December 17, 1901, Box 1, GHS Papers.
84 THS Minutes, GHS Papers.
85 Charles W. Ramsdell to C.A. Tower, September 6, 1919, Box 2L464, Charles W. Ramsdell, Sr. Papers, CAH; C.W. Ramsdell to E.G. Littlejohn, October 18 1919, Box 2L464, Ramsdell Papers.
collection, and he even reported having seen the archive with Littlejohn during a visit to Galveston.  

Ramsdell argued that the papers would be better cared for by the university and that it would be easier for historians to access it in Austin. Littlejohn responded in agreement but revealed to Ramsdell reluctance from his fellow members. He dutifully called a meeting in January 1920 but failed to gain approval for Ramsdell’s plan. Both Rabbi Cohen and Robert G. Street spoke out against the transfer and wanted the materials to stay on the island. The seven members present also took it upon themselves to elect new officers, naming Cohen president, John M. Winterbotham vice-president, and Littlejohn secretary-treasurer.

The society did not act again until May 1921, when the members met to accept Littlejohn’s resignation as custodian of the archives. The Rosenberg Library became the official custodian of the collection. In this role, the library could allow inspection of the materials without Littlejohn’s supervision, but little else would change with respect to their storage conditions. In 1923, the library held an exhibition, organized by society vice-president Winterbotham, celebrating the archive of the Galveston Historical Societies and displaying a hundred and one articles throughout its corridors. In an effort to draw new attention to the collection and encourage scholarship, the library announced

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86 P.C. Tucker III to C.W. Ramsdell, May 7, 1917, Box 2L429, TSHA Papers; C.W. Ramsdell to P.C. Tucker III, May 15, 1917, Box 2L429, TSHA Papers; P.C. Tucker III to C.W. Ramsdell, May 20, 1917, Box 2L429, TSHA Papers. Tucker and Ramsdell maintained an active correspondence for many years as Tucker was donating his private historical collection and his family papers to the TSHA.  
87 C.W. Ramsdell to E.G. Littlejohn, October 17, 1919, Box 2L464, Ramsdell Papers.  
88 E.G. Littlejohn to C.W. Ramsdell, October 18, 1919, Box 2L464, Ramsdell Papers.  
90 THS Minutes, GHS Papers; Minutes of the Board of Directors, Box 4, Rosenberg Library Records MS#79-0005, GTHC.
the exhibition and briefly described the collection in both the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and the *American Historical Review*.91

Although The Texas Historical Society of Galveston effectively had not functioned for a quarter century, it did not officially cease existence until March 31, 1931. Six members of the society assembled at the Rosenberg Library to discuss the archive. Frank Patten, a society member and the librarian of the Rosenberg Library, revealed that his institution could not do much toward making the materials accessible to the public as long as the historical society retained ownership. According to the past agreement, the library simply served as custodian and had refused any financial responsibility. Patten said that, if the society officially donated the collection, the library could and would thoroughly catalog and organize the manuscripts thereby making them more readily available to researchers. The members agreed, and the library’s board of directors officially accepted the archival donation at their next meeting.92 The Texas Historical Society of Galveston did not meet again, but the members continued their own individual historical work.

However we judge the success of the various nineteenth-century Galveston historical societies, the groups successfully amassed a valuable collection of historical materials and kept them on the island. The legacy of Dozier Herbert, Philip C. Tucker, Jr., P.C. Tucker III, Elbridge G. Littlejohn, and Rabbi Henry Cohen exists today in the vaults of the Rosenberg Library’s Galveston and Texas History Center. Since the Rosenberg took ownership in 1931, the library has cataloged and organized the

92 Minutes of the Board of Directors, Box 4, Rosenberg Library Records.
collection, and the Center facilitates researchers’ use of the archive. The memory of the early historical societies lived on in Galveston, and in 1942 the city welcomed another reincarnation of the Galveston Historical Society, which later transformed into the successful historic preservation organization, the Galveston Historical Foundation.
Rosenberg Librarian Frank C. Patten died in January 1934 after a thirty year career at the library. In death, Patten, a bachelor many considered married to the library, left his $12,000 estate to the Rosenberg. The library hired Joseph S. Ibbotson as his replacement in 1936, but due to monetary constraints, accessions essentially stopped with Patten's death.¹ In early 1940 the library's board of directors and Ibbotson expressed concern over the state of the library. John Harris, a member of the Rosenberg Library's board of directors, knew of a support organization for the Charlottesville Public Library in Virginia, and the Rosenberg's board appointed a three-person committee consisting of Ibbotson, Katherine Vedder Pauls, and William M. Morgan to investigate the organization of a similar friends group for Galveston. An initial meeting was held on May 22, 1940, with thirty-four people present. According to an early history of the group, however, "the organization encountered difficulty in getting under way during the next two years."² On February 25, 1942, another meeting was held, and Anne Amnions Brindley elected president. During the year, membership swelled to 364, $1,000 was donated to the book fund, and more than sixty books donated.³

Brindley, born in Bosque County, Texas, in 1904, had earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a bachelor of journalism degree from Mary Hardin-Baylor College, as well as

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² John N. Olson, "Highlights of Friends of the Rosenberg Library: The First Ten Years," Rosenberg Library Friends Subject File, GTHC. Brindley, interview.
³ Olson, "Highlights of Friends of the Rosenberg Library."
a Bachelor of Science degree and an R.N. from the University of Texas School of Nursing. She moved to Galveston as a newlywed in 1929, and her husband, Dr. Paul Brindley, worked as a pathologist and professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB).\(^4\) In 1952 Brindley wrote, "I have been a newspaper woman, a publicist and the educational director of a school of nursing. However, my chief interest always has been welfare and civic work. Historical research is a hobby which I find too fascinating."\(^5\) A few years after the penning of this letter, though, historical research and Texas and Galveston history became a primary focus of her life.

Shortly after the 1940 founding of the Friends of the Rosenberg Library, the library opened the John Miller Winterbotham Memorial Room, a reading and storage room for the historical collection. Winterbotham, the last vice-president of the Texas Historic Society of Galveston, a member of the library’s board of directors, and a dedicated volunteer who spent years cataloging and publicizing the rare collection, died in April 1940 and funded the room through a bequest in his will. The Winterbotham Room was considered beautiful and even featured a microfilm reader, but the collection — which now included over 1,600 volumes and 25,000 manuscripts — was seldom used by researchers. Ibbotson, concerned about the lack of local interest in historic matters, discussed the situation with Brindley. They both wanted to generate interest in the historical collections and agreed to call a meeting of the Friends of the Rosenberg Library members interested in historic matters.\(^6\)

\(^5\) Letter from Anne Ammons Brindley to Dr. Maresh, April 28, 1952, Box 1, Anne Ammons Brindley Papers MS#94-0002, GTHC.
\(^6\) Greene, "Foresight Built the Rosenberg Library," 66; Brindley, interview; Galveston and Texas History Center, "History of the Galveston and Texas History Center," http://www.gthcenter.org/history.htm.
A small group consisting of Ibbotson, Brindley, Rabbi Henry Cohen, Katherine Vedder Pauls (Mrs. Cortes Pauls), T. D. Affleck, Walter Grover, Ruth Austin Cooke (Mrs. Willard Cooke), and John N. Olson met in the fall of 1942 and agreed to call a public meeting for all interested in reestablishing the Historical Society of Galveston or reactivating the Texas Historical Society. These men and women were no strangers to the past incarnations of Galveston’s historical societies. Rabbi Cohen had served as the final president of the Texas Historical Society, and Walter Grover, an attorney, was the son of dedicated historical society member George W. Grover. Grover, Pauls, Cooke, and Olson were also native Galvestonians.7

The organizational meeting was held at the Rosenberg Library at 8 P.M. on October 29, 1942. Pauls gave a presentation entitled “Reminisces of Early Galveston” and Brindley gave a talk, “A Brief History of the Galveston Historical Society and Its Successor, the Texas Historical Society, 1871-1931.” Brindley closed her talk with a call for action, stating:

The time has come to consider the purposes for which the Galveston Historical Society and its successor, the Texas Historical Society, were organized, and to decide whether the purposes have been fulfilled, or can ever be fulfilled. It cannot be said that these societies failed, even if at times they did not keep alive sufficient interest among their whole membership to carry on a full program of work. For without their contributions and their collections this city would be far poorer today than it is in its sources of information for a history of Galveston, and the whole State of Texas would have lost great documents and groups of original sources of history. Moreover the inspiration of the leaders of these two historical societies can carry forward, even now, the work which will never be finished, so long

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7 Brindley, interview; Anne A. Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors,” January 29, 1981, Box 1, Anne Ammons Brindley and Walter E. Grover Papers MS#89-0017, GTHC; Anne A. Brindley, “Galveston Historical Foundation,” 1971, Box 1, Brindley and Grover Papers.
as men work together for the upbuilding of their city and
state and nation.\textsuperscript{8}

The group elected officers: Grover as president, Affleck as vice-president, and Olson as
secretary-treasurer. They also agreed to meet regularly, and Galveston once again started
down the road with a new historical society.\textsuperscript{9} The constitution and by-laws, drafted later,
specified that “The purpose of this society shall be the collection and preservation in the
Rosenberg Library of documents, printed matter, all relics relating to the history and
development of this region of Texas, particularly Galveston, and the promotion of
research and the diffusion of knowledge about Galveston and its history.”\textsuperscript{10} The by-laws
also stipulated that the group would hold three meetings a year and active membership
dues of $1 would be payable at the start of each calendar year.\textsuperscript{11}

The community responded positively to the new Galveston Historical Society.
The Rosenberg served as a meeting place and its collections inspired Galvestonians to
support historical pursuits. A year after the first meeting, Secretary-Treasurer Olson
reported the progress of the reinvigorated society to H. Bailey Carroll, a University of
Texas history professor then serving as associate director of the Texas State Historical
Association. Olson wrote, “The response has been encouraging, as we now have 65
members of the reorganized Society. Nothing unusual has been accomplished thus far . .
. . It is the sincere hope of all concerned that the Society will expand its work, and in that
way sustain the interest of those who have been active in causing it to function once

\textsuperscript{8} Anne A. Brindley, “Brief History of the Galveston Historical Society and Its Successor, the Texas
Historical Society, 1871-1931, read at a meeting to organize a new historical society in Galveston, held
October 29, 1942 at 8p.m. in the Rosenberg Library,” Box 1, GHS Papers.
\textsuperscript{9} Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors.”
\textsuperscript{10} Galveston Historical Society Constitution, Galveston Historical Society Subject File, GTHC.
\textsuperscript{11} Galveston Historical Society By-Laws, GHS Subject File, GTHC.
more.”

Like the past historical societies in Galveston, the group struggled in the first few years, but, unlike its predecessors, this Galveston Historical Society met regularly and developed a large membership. In its first five years, the organization put on seven historical programs, including the speech “An early history of Galveston” by Katherine Vedder Pauls and talks by Evy Waters Mills (Mrs. Ballinger Mills, Sr.), I.H. Kempner, and Lou W. Kemp. But Olson’s 1943 statement that the Society had not accomplished anything unusual remained true — at least until the fall of 1947.

The society elected James D. Claitor president and T. D. Affleck vice-president at its May 23, 1947, meeting, and, according to Claitor, “The membership had come to the realization that the Society had reached a turning point where it had to either go ahead or go back and all wanted to see it progress.” In an effort to reinvigorate the membership, the Society hosted a special meeting on November 13, 1947 at the Rosenberg. They drew Galveston’s social elite to the meeting by specially honoring those “past eighty years of age, who have made a profound contribution to the history of Galveston,” designating them “our living, vibrant link with the past” and asking them to give short speeches on Galveston of the past. Featured speaker Dr. Chauncey D. Leake, director of UTMB, lectured on the history of the Galveston Medical Center, but the primary function of the meeting was to inspire Galvestonians to focus on the past and to preserve what they could in the Rosenberg Library. Claitor and past president Walter Grover both addressed the meeting, asking for a recommitment to the purposes of the Society. In addition, Grover specifically made a call for the collection of historical information and

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12 John N. Olson to H. Bailey Carroll, November 23, 1943, Box 3J304, TSHA Papers.
13 “Record of Programs Rendered by Galveston Historical Society,” Galveston Historical Society Scrapbook 1947-1949, compiled by J. D. Claitor, Box 1, GHS Papers.
15 Program, Fall Meeting, November 13, 1947, Galveston Historical Society Subject File, GTHC.
documentation. The officers feared that the Society would go in the same direction of the past historical societies if action was not taken. Although an organization could exist with a healthy number of paid members and a regular (if not infrequent) meeting schedule, without a large roster of members dedicated to active service and leadership, a voluntary society would fail. The officers of the Galveston Historical Society recognized the fragility of their organization and sought to motivate the membership. In the membership information printed on the reverse of the November meeting’s program, they articulated clearly a new membership policy:

The Society does not solicit either members or money. However, those interested in Galveston History are welcomed into the Society. The initiative must come from the one interested. In this way the vigor of the Society is maintained at a high pitch because it is composed of people who are willing to dedicate their effort to its objectives.

The membership dues are as follows:

- Active membership $1.00 Annually
- Supporting membership 3.00 Annually
- Life membership 25.00 (for life)

The above is published solely to afford information that is frequently requested and is not, under any circumstances, to be construed as a solicitation for either members or money. Non-members are always welcome at our meetings and their attendance implies no obligation either to join the Society or contribute to it.16

The new membership policy and the meeting were a success. William L. Moody, Jr., became the society’s first life member on November 17, 1947. Member numbers rose steadily in the years after the meeting — the society reported 80 members in 1948 and

16 Ibid.
100 members in 1951. The group continued to sponsor programs by both professional historians from around the state and local amateurs and encouraged original research conducted by local members. Non-Galvestonian speakers to the Society included Dr. Henry Hunt Ransom, then Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin, in 1955; Ed Kilman, editor of the *Houston Post*, in 1949; Professor H. Balley Carroll, editor of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and University of Texas history professor, in 1949; and Herbert H. Fletcher, a Houston editor, bookseller, and publisher, in 1951. Galvestonians such as Judge Charles G. Dibrell, Admiral S. M. Robinson, Dr. Truman G. Blocker, Rosenberg Library archivist Ruth Nichols, Anne Ammons Brindley, and Katherine Vedder Pauls rounded out the busy GHS schedule. Topics ranged from Samuel May Williams, the history of surgery at UTMB, and the Texas Navy during the 1836 Revolution to "Texas Folklore and the Origin of Names," "Indian Art and Philosophy," and "Myth and Mystery in Texas History." Chapter members Robert Hendrix, Anne A. Brindley, and Ruth Nichols developed their research into articles published in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and Alex L. ter Braake

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18 Announcement of Fall Meeting, November 22, 1948, Galveston Historical Society Subject File, GTHC; Announcement of General Meeting, May 23, 1949, GHS Subject File; Announcement of Fall Meeting, November 30, 1949, GHS Subject File; Announcement of February 26, 1950, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of May 29, 1950, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of November 26, 1950, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of April 3, 1951, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of November 12, 1951, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of Fall Meeting, November 23, 1952, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of March 4, 1953, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of May 17, 1953, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of November 16, 1953, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of Spring Meeting, April 26, 1954, GHS Subject File; Announcement of November 8, 1954, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of February 17, 1955, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of June 21, 1955, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of November 4, 1955, Meeting, GHS Subject File; Announcement of April 3, 1956, Meeting, GHS Subject File.
published the book *Texas: The Drama of Its Postal Past* in 1970.\(^{19}\) Ruth Nichols and the Rosenberg Library published in 1956 Nichols’s larger project, a calendar of the Samuel May Williams papers, as *Samuel May Williams, 1795-1858*.\(^{20}\) Walter Grover continued his effort to gather material for the Rosenberg and wrote to several long-time Galvestonians in 1950 and 1951 in an effort to gather information on the history of the western part of Galveston Island for an article he intended to write and for the Rosenberg archives.\(^{21}\)

In 1951 the Galveston Historical Society published a booklet, *Historic Galveston Homes*, documenting twenty-one historic buildings and the location of six previously demolished structures. In many ways this small publication indicated the direction the historical society’s members wanted it to go and was an early call from historically minded Galvestonians to save their historic properties. The society sold five thousand copies of the fifty-page booklet to both tourists and islanders for fifty cents each. It described the history of each property in a short article illustrated by an image of the building (four of the six former sites are not illustrated). Brindley, the society president from 1949 to 1951, and Ruth Cooke, society president 1951-1953, spearheaded the project. The booklet was a group effort by the society’s leadership and longtime Galvestonians. Active society members Katherine V. Pauls, Emma Lee, and Ruth Nichols assisted Brindley on the editorial committee. Brindley’s husband, Dr. Paul


\(^{20}\) *Samuel May Williams, 1795-1858*, compiled by Ruth G. Nichols and S. W. Lifflander, (Galveston, TX: Rosenberg Library Press, 1956).

\(^{21}\) Walter Grover to Anton Malsberger, June 12. 1950, Box 1, GHS Papers; W. Grover to Richard Manzel, June 14, 1950, Box 1, GHS Papers; W. Grover to A.C. Schaper, September 14, 1950, Box 1, GHS Papers; W. Grover to Paul Boehl, October 14, 1950, Box 1, GHS Papers; W. Grover to Arthur Boehl, November 18, 1950, Box 1, GHS Papers; W. Grover to Sam T. Maceo, Box 1, GHS Papers.
Brindley, served on the Art Committee, and Cooke's husband, Dr. Willard R. Cooke, assisted by writing articles. Although aided by the Galveston Camera Club, Cooke took eight of the twenty-three photos herself. Of the fourteen listed article contributors, more than half were native islanders and most can be classified as community leaders, including Mary Moody Northen, I.H. Kempner, Katherine Vedder Pauls, Walter Grover, and J. D. Claitor. Six of the contributors (Northen, Kempner, Pauls, Grover, Mrs. Milo P. Fox, and Miss Gertrude Girardeau) wrote about homes where they spent their childhood and/or currently lived.  

The inclusion of the six sites, including the Waters-Moody House site at 1304 Tremont, the Gail Borden Home site at 34 Avenue P, the site of the Osterman Home at 24th Street and Broadway, the Frosh House site at 23rd and Broadway, the site of the Dyer Home at 2527 Avenue I, and the site of Laffite's Fort at 14th Street and Avenue A, indicate that historically minded Galvestonians recognized that the island was losing its architectural and historical treasures. In subtle ways, the text of the articles on the razed properties (and a few of the homes) suggests to the reader the sad state of the Galveston during the 1950s. The "Old Kempner Home" at 1528 Avenue I, with twelve beautiful fireplaces, inlaid hardwood floors, and stained glass windows, was revealed to be "a rooming house in a sad state of disrepair."  

The Osterman House, once the setting for "brilliant social events" and where "Mrs. Osterman cared for the wounded of both sides" following the Battle of Galveston in 1863, was sadly reported to have been destroyed in 1948 and the property converted into a used-car lot.  

revealed to the tourist (and reminded the disenchanted locals) the grand and historically

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22 Historic Galveston Homes (Galveston, Tx: The Galveston Historical Society, 1951).
23 Historic Galveston Homes, 28.
24 Historic Galveston Homes, 46.
important Galveston of the nineteenth century. Most importantly, the publication of the booklet raised awareness of the need for historic preservation at a time when islanders were not quite ready to respond to an outright call.

Three years later a crisis forced Galvestonians to take action and rally to save one of the island's historical treasures. In early August 1954 Virginia Ketchum Eisenhour and Mary Hutchings telephoned Anne A. Brindley and Doyle McDonald, president of the Galveston Historical Society between 1953 and 1955, about a rumor that the Samuel May Williams House — the second oldest house on the island — was for sale. The potential buyer, Mr. K.D. Jakovich, Eisenhour and Hutchings reported, intended to tear it down.\(^{25}\) Samuel May Williams had arrived in Texas in 1822 and worked as a translator and clerk for Stephen F. Austin for thirteen years. He went into partnership with Thomas F. McKinney in 1833, establishing a prosperous commission house in Quintana. During the Texas Revolution, the firm used its United States contacts to secure funding for the Texas Army. In 1838 Williams and McKinney relocated their business to Galveston Island and were part of the group of ten businessmen, led by Michael B. Menard, who incorporated the Galveston City Company. At the same time, Williams personally secured the funding for the five ships that became the Second Texas Navy. Construction began in the fall of 1839 on the Williams home, a raised Greek revival cottage situated facing east on two ten-acre garden lots. Because of his election to Texas’ Fourth Congress, Williams did not oversee the construction himself and instead depended on his partner, McKinney, to attend to the details. McKinney liked the design of Williams’s house and built an identical one nearby at 41\(^{st}\) and Avenue T. While in Galveston, Williams operated the first commercial bank in Texas and even circulated paper money. He died September 13, 1839, of tuberculosis, and his daughter, Virginia Williams, inherited the property.

1858, without a will, and his heirs divided the liquidated estate, selling the house to Philip Crosby Tucker, Jr.\textsuperscript{26} The house remained in the Tucker family for ninety-five years until the death of Tucker’s unmarried daughter, Mary Cecilia Tucker, in late June 1953. She left the family home to the Tucker Masonic Lodge No. 297, intending for it to be a memorial to her father, the lodge’s founder. After careful consideration, however, the Lodge members decided they were not in a financial position to undertake the restoration and maintenance of the home, and K.D. Jakovich bought the house in early 1954.\textsuperscript{27}

As members of the Galveston Historical Society and native islanders, Eisenhour and Hutchings felt the Society should do something to prevent the historic house’s destruction. McDonald and Brindley agreed to investigate the rumor. McDonald, a practicing attorney, reviewed the society’s constitution and by-laws and concluded that they did not allow the society to own real property. Regardless, he agreed to go ahead with plans for an emergency meeting. Upon learning that Jakovich had already bought the house, Brindley contacted him to inquire about his plans for the site. Brindley and society member Katherine Randall (Mrs. Edward Randall, Jr.) met with Jakovich, a naturalized U.S. citizen originally from Poland, on August 10. He explained that he purchased the house as an investment and did not know of its historic significance. According to Brindley’s account, he became very cooperative upon learning of the house’s history. Jakovich already had a potential buyer for the house, but offered to sell


it to the historical society for $16,000 — the $15,000 he had paid for the property plus $1,000 he had spent on closing costs and basic improvements. After Brindley explained that the society did not have “even one penny” Jakovich agreed to hold the house for six months and offered financing of $5,000 down and twice-yearly note payments with 5% interest.28

At the August 11, 1954, emergency meeting of the Society’s officers held in the Winterbotham Room of the Rosenberg Library, the future of the Williams House seemed dim. Eight members attended; and although McDonald intended for the two women who brought the situation to his attention to take part, only one came (and she left before the vote on raising money). According to Brindley “the consensus of that group was disappointingly negative.”29 After presenting the terms of the offer by Jackovich, Brindley individually asked each person present if they would commit to raising $1,000 toward the down payment in the next month and all but two declined. Brindley later recalled that the members gave excuses such as, “‘The house isn’t worth saving’,” and, “‘I’m not going to stick my neck out on that old house’.”30 In hindsight, she explained of such responses:

My belief is that having lived here all of their lives and seeing such houses daily and hearing about the old history of Galveston, they simply did not realize the historic significance about preservation in Galveston and several other Texas communities that could and would begin right here with the preservation of the Williams-Tucker home.31

Despite the lack of interest among Society officers, Brindley did not give up. She sought support for the house’s preservation in the press. A report of the emergency meeting

29Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors.”
30Ibid.
31Brindley, interview.
appeared on the front page of the *Galveston News* the following day, and Brindley, using research compiled by Ruth Nichols, wrote articles published in the *Galveston News*, the evening *Galveston Tribune*, and the Houston press on the significance of the house and Williams.\(^{32}\)

Brindley organized a mass public meeting for the morning of Thursday, October 19, 1954, to generate support for saving the Williams House. She realized the power of organizations to raise money and mobilize members for a cause. In an article for the October 19 edition of the *Galveston News*, she reported that twenty-three groups planned on sending representatives to the morning meeting; and she revealed a plan for the city’s women’s clubs to assess their memberships, purchase the house, and operate it as a “Women’s Club House.” Approximately one hundred people attended the meeting held at the Rosenberg Library, and many spoke passionately about saving the historic property from destruction. Those present agreed to contact the members and/or leadership of their organizations for support and meet again October 21. The Galveston press supported Brindley and her idea, and the *Galveston News* published a lead editorial, “Women Have Good Idea,” encouraging the preservation of the house.\(^{33}\)

Despite what seemed like overwhelming support at the October 19 meeting, the October 21 gathering in the Lecture Room of the Rosenberg did not go as well as Brindley had hoped. Representatives from various groups, including the Galveston Civic League, Daughters of the American Revolution, Colonial Dames, United Daughters of


the Confederacy, Women's Auxiliary to Galveston County Medical Society, Pilot Club, Quota Club, and Beta Study Club attended. Although a decision on how to raise the funds necessary to purchase the house was not reached, the group voted to form an organization in order to raise $26,000 for the purchase and restoration of the Williams House. They also agreed to have Brindley serve as temporary chairman and Rita B. Nagle as secretary and to meet a third time one week later.  

The group met again on October 28, 1954, in the Lecture Room, and the secretary recorded it as “a meeting of those citizens who are interested in preserving the Williams-Tucker house.” After an invocation given by Rosenberg Librarian Lamar Wallace, representatives from the Galveston organizations at the previous meeting reported pledges for the purchase and restoration totaling $2,658. The largest pledges came from the Women’s Auxiliary for the Galveston County Medical Society ($750) and from members of the Galveston Historical Society ($1,000) — a fact not surprising considering Brindley’s membership in both. The men and women at the meeting formally voted to form an incorporated non-profit organization named “The Galveston Association for the Preservation of Historical Sites and Landmarks” for historic projects and instructed chairwoman Brindly to form a committee to draft the constitution and by-laws. She appointed Doyle McDonald, Katherine V. Pauls, Marie T. Lee, and Lila Belle Brownell to the committee, and they decided to meet on November 9 to begin drafting the necessary documents.

34 Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors”; Galveston Historical Foundation Minutes, October 21, 1954, Box 1, GHS Papers.
35 GHF Minutes October 28, 1954, Box 1, GHS Papers.
On November 12, 1954, the official paperwork chartering the Galveston Historical Foundation, Incorporated, was filed with the State of Texas. It is not known why the leaders decided to change the society’s name. The charter states that the private corporation was intended for educational endeavors within the confines of Galveston County and details the non-profit’s purpose as “the preservation, restoration and maintenance of historic sites and landmarks located within the confines of Galveston County, Texas, in order to promote the knowledge and appreciation of the history of the State of Texas and of Galveston County and of the City of Galveston.” The state entrusts the corporation to five directors, listing Brindley, Pauls, Lee, Brownell, and T.D. Affleck appointees for the first year.37

At 10:30 A.M. on Tuesday, November 23, 1954, in the lecture hall of the Rosenberg Library, the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF) officially met for the first time. The members approved the constitution and by-laws and elected Anne A. Brindley their first president. Members also elected Katherine Randall vice-president, Roderic D. Dibbert recording secretary, Marie T. Lee corresponding secretary, Allen Cameron treasurer, and T.D. Affleck and Lila Belle Brownell members-at-large. The by-laws specified meetings would be held twice a year, in October and January, and the executive committee would meet quarterly. It also laid out various classes of membership, with charter members paying $12 by the end of January 1955, supporting members $25 or more, contributing members $12 for their first year, active members $5, and junior members (under 18 years old) fifty cents. The Galveston News article published November 24 recognized Dr. and Mrs. Fred Aves of Dickinson as the first charter

37 Galveston Historical Foundation, Certificate of Incorporation, Filed November 12, 1954, Texas Secretary of State Records, Austin, Texas.
members and announced that subscriber memberships of $100 or more already had been received from John Harris, John McCullough, John Winterboham, Jr., Robert Hutchings, Dr. Titus Harris, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter E. Grover.38

In the months following the November meeting, GHF collected membership fees and donations and made plans for the purchase and restoration of the Williams House. They held the first board meeting at Randall’s home on January 3, 1955, and finalized plans for the first general meeting on January 10. At that meeting, featured speaker Dr. Chauncy Leake spoke on the work of other foundations and the development of historical projects in the United States. Randall also spoke about other projects similar to the Williams House. Money continued to trickle in, and at a special March 25, 1955, board meeting the officers empowered Brindley to enter into a purchase contract for the historic property.39

On May 10, 1955, Brindley signed the contract with Jackovich and made the $5,000 down payment. The Foundation agreed to a purchase price of $16,000 and arranged financing for the remaining $11,000 at 5% interest, with payments of $687.50 due in May and November of each year. Initially, GHF funded the down payment through a $1,500 gift from the Edward R. Randall family, $500 from the Hutchings Sealy Bank, and $3,000 from membership fees and donations.40 It was a happy day for the foundation, and Brindley later recounted:

38 GHF Meeting Minutes, November 23, 1954, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Constitution and By-Laws, Box 1, GHS Papers; “Galveston Historical Group Organizes, Elects Officers,” Galveston Daily News, November 24, 1954; Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors.”
39 Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors”; GHF Minutes, January 3, 1955, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, January 10, 1955, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes March 25, 1955, Box 1, GHS Papers.
We signed with relief, but the big struggle was just beginning. This was a benchmark in Texas for preservation of historic houses and an inspiration to other communities who wrote or came to learn the details of how we had accomplished this. Each one has some particular house to save and no local support. 41

Progress on the Williams House advanced quickly. After years of vacancy, the structure was in terrible condition and a tremendous amount of cleaning needed to be completed before repair and restoration estimates could be determined. Vagrants had used the house as shelter, and vandals had broken into the empty house. The staircase, mantels, and fireplaces were in parts and scattered throughout the house. Before the Tucker executors moved the furnishings and remaining belongings into storage, vandals had destroyed the family’s considerable library and “cabinets full of fine cutglass,” leaving glass and paper remnants strewn about. Initially, Brindley and one unnamed volunteer spent three days on their knees sorting out the Tucker family papers, books, and belongings scattered throughout the house. Philip C. Tucker left an extensive law library, and the women returned the valuable items to the Foundation’s attorney, Doyle McDonald. They worked without power and water, bringing flashlights and bottled water from home. After the initial, general clean-up, Sarah Lawes (Mrs. William Lawes) went to both the Light Company and the City Water Works, and, after she explained the work of GHF, the heads of both connected the utilities for free. Brindley then brought

41 Brindley, interview.
her own mops and brooms (and her once-a-week yardman) to the Williams House and spent three weeks cleaning the house and clearing the property.  

On May 28, 1955, the board appointed W.A. Eicher, Asa L. Crow (president of Gulf Lumber Company), Charles Zweiner, James Bradner, and “any women interested” to a committee to assess the condition of the house and determine the cost for necessary repairs. Charles Zweiner, an architect, had agreed in January 1955, five months before GHF made the down payment, to supervise the renovations for free. Because GHF did not have much money to spend on repairs, the group decided to complete only the most basic and necessary projects. The house needed to be leveled first and then weatherproofed — replacing the roof and broken window panes took top priority. Early on, the group contracted with a leveler for $300. Brindley arrived one morning to resume her cleaning and found the house up on blocks. The leveler recommended that the house simply be set back down. He explained that the storms and floods the house had survived over its lifetime shaped the supports, and to level the house would ruin the strong cypress, pine, and oak logs supporting it and might break framework that could not be replaced with equal materials. Brindley later recounted, “Since we had no money, my decision was obvious.” The leveler set the house back down and added two supports under the southwest portion free of charge.

Almost immediately after the Galveston News announced the purchase of the Williams House, a neighbor called Brindley to inform her of two large, uncovered

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43 Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors.”
44 GHF Minutes, May 28, 1955, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, January 26, 1956, Box 1, GHS Papers; “City Architect Offers to Supervise Task”; Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors.”
cisterns on the property. Because they might be a hazard to neighborhood children and pets, she urged Brindley to take action. Brindley crawled under the house herself to investigate. She discovered that the two cisterns were connected and that each contained 6 inches of water. After concluding that the cisterns were a breeding ground for mosquitoes, she dumped in a sack of lime and two cans of crank case oil in an attempt to control the insects. Upon returning home, Brindley called Asa Crow for advice on how to cheaply cover the cisterns. He told Brindley that he would inspect the property the next day, Saturday. By the time Brindley arrived the following morning, the cisterns had been covered. GHF never received a bill for supplies or labor.45

After the clean-up, the leveling, and the unexpected cistern issue, GHF focused on weatherproofing the house. The house revealed parts of four different roofs, cypress, slate, pine, and rolled asphalt, and it “leaked like a sieve.”46 A new roof was needed, and the advisory committee agreed on an inexpensive, fire resistant asphalt roof for $950. The original roof had been constructed using cypress shingles, but cypress carried a hefty price tag, and the committee discovered that it was no longer properly cured, causing the shingles to warp and leak within a short period of time. Most of the original blown glass window panes had been broken by vandals. The Pittsburg Glass Company donated uncut glass to the Foundation and retired engineer C.H. Stein cut and replaced eighty-five broken windowpanes. In many cases he repaired or rebuilt the window frames as well. Stein spent six months working on the house for free, and, in addition, to the windows, he

45 Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors.”
46 Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors”
repaired the mantels and staircase. In a feature article on him in the *Galveston News* in March 1956, the English-born Stein stated, “I don’t understand you native Galvestonians. Many of you won’t spend five dollars to save your own historic landmarks, but you spend vast sums traveling to my Old Country, England, to see the antiquities here. . . . Don’t you realize that if we in England had done what you are doing and allowed those historic places to be destroyed, you would have no reason to go to England?” Stein believed his work to preserve the home of such an important Texan to be a privilege and that it was a way to show his appreciation for the United States, Texas, and Galveston.

Work, inside and out, continued on the Williams House as Galvestonians contributed the necessary supplies, funds, and labor. The partition between the old schoolroom and the library was removed in order to form a room large enough to seat one hundred people for meetings. J. M. Plummer of Plummer Exterminating donated his services and treated the house for termites and other insects. Brindley initially paid her own yardman to work on the property and solicited the Galveston Boy Scout troop to help cut shoulder-high weeds. Neighbors also cut the grass, and members of the Junior Historians Club at Ball High cleaned the yard on occasion. Brindley wanted to preserve the front flagstone walk. Originally four stones wide, in 1955 after years of destruction and actual theft of the stones, it was only two stones wide. Brindley removed the stones and carried them one at a time into the house for storage. In 1956 the Galveston Girl Scouts funded the construction of a $1,000 fence around the property.

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49 Ibid.
50 Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors”; GHF Minutes, January 26, 1956, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, February 3, 1957, Box 1, GHS Papers.
Vandals continued to be a problem with the Williams House. They repeatedly broke in and destroyed work done by volunteers. The first Halloween the Foundation owned the house, a neighbor called Brindley at 11 P.M. to report that the house was filled with teenagers. The police arrived and the kids scattered, but not before part of the stairway, all four mantles, and several windows had been broken. Brindley and GHF recognized the need for a live-in caretaker but could not afford to make the improvements necessary for an apartment at that time. Despite the setback, GHF volunteers continued their work and donations continued to come in. Mrs. K.I. Fosdick contributed $100 to wallpaper one room as a model in the hope that it would inspire donations for the other rooms. A professional, Nils Thompson, agreed to do the work for free, and Fosdick's money stretched to complete not simply one room but three.\(^5^1\)

In 1957 much of the work on the inside had been completed. The volunteers stored the extra paint and materials in a locked downstairs bedroom. Brindley departed for a two-week seminar on historic preservation and American history in Cooperstown, New York, and felt encouraged by what they had accomplished thus far. She returned to find the house once again damaged by vandals. Paint, plaster, and shellac had been poured in the center of the dining room and flung throughout. Brindley recounted, "I stood in a state of shock unable to accept what my eyes revealed. The whole thing had to be redone."\(^5^2\) Regardless of financial difficulties, the house immediately required the presence of a live-in caretaker. Two upstairs bedrooms and an upstairs bath had to be prepared for the residents, with one of the bedrooms converted into a kitchen and dining

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\(^5^1\) Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors”; GHF Minutes, January 26, 1956, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, February 3, 1957, Box 1, GHS Papers.

\(^5^2\) Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors”; GHF Minutes October 1, 1957, Box 1, GHS Papers.
room. A.J. Warren Jr. donated materials and labor to install the plumbing needed for the bath and kitchen, and C. H. Stein rewired the rooms and completed other renovations. Mr. and Mrs. John King moved in as the caretakers in early 1959. In exchange for free rent and utilities, King agreed to care for the garden, which by that time had been landscaped by the Galveston Garden Club, and undertake repairs. His wife agreed to give tours to visitors once the house opened.53

After years of physical labor and endless fundraising, GHF opened the Williams house to the public on April 15, 1959. In the early spring, Brindley oversaw several last-minute projects to get the house in the finest condition possible. Maire Lee donated a flagpole, which was erected in the yard of the house. The original flagstones that Brindley had so carefully protected returned to the yard in two rows, forming a path from the front steps to the front gate. Inside the house, the cypress floors were sanded and refinished according to recommendations by the National Trust. The San Jacinto Museum and the Harris County Heritage Foundation loaned furnishings, and Galvestonians also donated various items such as a pedestal mirror once belonging to the first Mrs. Philip Tucker and a marble topped cherry-wood chest.54 GHF went to great lengths planning for the dedication ceremony (organized by Sara Lawes, Mrs. Ed Harris, and Mrs. E.H. Gibson) and the evening’s celebratory dinner (chaired by Mrs. Ed Harris). GHF sent invitations to “dignitaries throughout the state and nation and citizens active in the civic and cultural life of the city” and invited Professor H. Bailey Carroll of the

53 Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors”; GHF Minutes, October 1, 1957, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, February 16, 1958, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, September 19, 1958, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, January 28, 1959, Box 1, GHS Papers; “Report of Mrs. William Lawes – 1959,” Box 1, GHS Papers.
University of Texas and Richard H. Howland, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to give featured speeches.\textsuperscript{55}

The festivities honoring the Samuel May Williams House on April 15 were a great success. The dedication ceremony began at 3:30 P.M. Richard H. Howland from the National Trust gave a short greeting, and Professor Carroll then addressed the crowd on the significance of Samuel May Williams. Katherine V. Pauls unveiled a plaque given by the Galveston Chapter of the Colonial Dames of America, and members of the George Washington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution participated in a flag raising ceremony. The Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Sidney Sherman Chapter, donated a leather bound guest registration book to the house. Younger Galvestonians participated in the ceremony with the Ball High School Choir singing the national anthem and the “Eyes of Texas,” the Galveston Girl Scouts leading a blessing for the house, and the Ball High School Junior Historians Club serving as ushers during the event. The ceremony concluded with GHF president Anne A. Brindley cutting the scarlet ribbon strung across the front gate and the crowd inspecting the house and enjoying refreshments. That evening at the Buccaneer Hotel, a dinner meeting and celebration took place. Food modeled on that eaten in the 1830s was served family style, and after greetings and congratulations from George W. Hill, director of the Texas State Survey Committee, Howland, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, spoke.\textsuperscript{56}


\textsuperscript{56} Program, April 15, 1959, Dedication of Williams-Tucker Home; Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors”; “Historic Home to be Dedicated.”
The dedication of the Williams House celebrated GHF’s success. The house remained open to tourists during summer afternoons, and the Society erected two billboards reading “See Most Historic Home in Texas – 3601 – P, Open Daily 2-5 p.m. Summer.” Although many individuals donated time, money, and materials to the preservation cause, Anne A. Brindley was the true driving force behind the project. Without her dedication to the Williams House and the establishment of the Galveston Historical Foundation, it is doubtful the home would have been saved. The story is often referred to by those unfamiliar with it as one of “little old ladies in tennis shoes” forming a patriotic women’s organization to save a local house. Brindley addressed this mischaracterization herself, stating clearly, “The Galveston Historical Foundation is not now and never has been a women’s organization.” It is true that ladies (perhaps some even wearing tennis shoes!) played a major role in the formation of the Foundation and the preservation of the house, and without these dedicated workers, the house might not have been saved. The early plan for the Williams House called for it to become a Women’s Club House, but this was not a project the groups fully supported. Men, however, always figured prominently in the GHF’s founding and early history, starting with the Williams House restoration. The leadership always included both men and women, but, more importantly, the two genders respected the contributions of one another.

In the five years between the founding of the Galveston Historical Foundation and the dedication of the Williams House, the Galveston Historical Society merged with the Foundation. Very few cities can host two successful (competing) historical associations,

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58 Brindley, interview.
and leaders recognized that a single group would be able to accomplish more support for historical pursuits and could recruit and maintain a larger active membership. The organizations shared leaders, and the same historically minded Galvestonians belonged to both. Despite minor differences and the fact that the Society could not own real property, leaders recognized that their goals melded perfectly. In January 1956, GHF leadership invited the Galveston Historical Society to join their incorporated non-profit. The Society voted unanimously to accept GHF’s merger invitation at their April 3, 1956, meeting, but the leadership demanded that GHF incorporate their purpose of collecting and preserving historical material in the Rosenberg Library and the promotion and diffusion of Galveston History. Both groups appointed members to a GHF and GHS joint committee to work out the details.

At the October 27, 1957, GHF meeting, the committee presented its report. They recommended that GHF form an archivist position, establish a set number of meetings per year, and form a program committee. They also suggested that the Foundation’s purpose amended to read:

the preservation, restoration and maintenance of historic sites and landmarks located within the confines of Galveston County, Texas, and for research and the collection and preservation in Rosenberg Library of documents, printed matter and relics, concerning the history of Galveston and Galveston County and for diffusion of knowledge with respect thereto.

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59 Brindley, interview; Brindley, “The Galveston Historical Foundation and its Progenitors.”
60 GHF Minutes, November 15, 1956, Box 1, GHS Papers; Katherine Randall to Anne A. Brindley, January 31, 1957, Galveston Historical Society Subject File, GTHC; GHF Minutes, February 3, 1957, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, October 27, 1957, Box 1, GHS Papers; GHF Minutes, February 16, 1958, Box 1, GHS Papers.
61 GHF Minutes, October 27, 1957.
The members present voted to accept and file the committee’s recommendations. President Brindley instructed that they be sent to all active members for review in preparation for a vote at the first GHF meeting in 1958. The official vote merging the Galveston Historical Society and the Galveston Historical Foundation took place at GHF’s annual meeting, February 16, 1958, in the Lecture Room of the Rosenberg Library. The motion carried and the Foundation went on to agree to appoint an archivist and a program chair. Although the merger took two years to complete, the delay was merely procedural. Members in both groups welcomed the merger and the expansion of GHF’s purpose without concern or ill-will. Galveston, long aware of its history, seemed now to have turned a corner. No longer were its citizens merely curious about the island’s past. They became actively engaged in preserving its past — and shaping its future.
Chapter 3
Expansion of Preservation Efforts

The Samuel May Williams House served as inspiration for the founding of the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF) and for the mobilization of preservation-minded Galvestonians, but Anne A. Brindley and early GHF leaders never intended the restoration to be the organization’s only project. Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, historically minded Galvestonians and non-Galvestonians educated the public about the need to preserve the island’s historical treasures. The preservation discussion gradually permeated the island during the mid-1960s, and Galvestonians began to take active steps toward protecting historically valuable structures and encouraging leaders to recognize the economic, cultural, and social power of historic preservation. This early preservation movement, however, was not undertaken exclusively by GHF. Most of the significant accomplishments of the 1960s were non-GHF projects headed by other island volunteer organizations and inspired by individuals not from Galveston. GHF did support the preservation work, and the organization’s individual members took active roles in all of the projects, however. Without the important preservation work done on the island in the 1960s and the publicity the projects garnered, Galvestonians would not have been able to use the organizational structure of the Galveston Historical Foundation to mount the revolutionary historical projects of the 1970s. The work during the 1960s raised the public awareness of what there was to save in Galveston and convinced many on the island that they should support an active historic preservation movement.

Anne A. Brindley used her role as the first president of GHF to speak publicly about the historical treasures of Galveston and the need to protect them for future
generations. She held strong opinions about the need to save historic landmarks, and even at a time when she (and GHF) dedicated most of her work towards protecting the Williams House, she always considered prospects for the group’s next project. At the first annual meeting of GHF, held January 26, 1956, she reminded Galvestonians of “the importance of restoring and preserving old homes, landmarks, etc., not only as a visible means honoring those founders and builders of Galveston, materially and aesthetically, but as inspirations for good citizenship, particularly to the youth of our city.”1 She repeatedly stressed these opinions at GHF meetings, hopeful that others eventually would be persuaded to join the movement. In October 1957 she reminded members “that the preservation of historical homes and landmarks was a necessity for the heritage of our youth,” and, in February 1958, she made an economic appeal, stating “that historical landmarks are the greatest single attraction to tourists throughout our country. Galveston has a rich, fascinating history, beautiful old homes, interesting early business houses and a potentially large community income in this untouched field.”2 The ideas in Brindley’s 1958 president’s address were supported and expanded upon by keynote speaker Richard H. Howland, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Howland spoke of how other communities in the United States benefited from preserving historic structures and stressed the idea of “making something old an asset for today.”3

In the early 1960s the idea of a historical district in Galveston’s East End began to actively take shape. At GHF’s 1957 annual meeting Brindley spoke of her idea for a

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1 Galveston Historical Foundation Minutes, January 26, 1956, Box 1, Galveston Historical Society Records MS#78-0003, Galveston and Texas History Center, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas (hereafter cited as GTHC).
2 GHF Minutes, October 27, 1957, Box 1, GHS Records; GHF Minutes, February 16, 1958, Box 1, GHS Records.
3 GHF Minutes, February 16, 1958.
four- to six-block section of restored homes that tourists could explore.\textsuperscript{4} The following year, Brindley expanded her dream and announced GHF’s “Long Range Plan for Galveston” that featured the preservation of a two-square-block area in the East End for tourists that included not only preserved homes but businesses such as a grocery, period restaurant, and ice cream parlor. She announced, “We believe Galveston has a great opportunity to realize a good income from this untouched field.”\textsuperscript{5} Inspired by the work done in other cities, H. W. Darst first proposed the idea of the Old Galveston Quarter in 1960, and Galveston State Representative Maco Stewart III strongly supported the idea.\textsuperscript{6} The 45-block area between 19\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} Streets and Broadway and Galveston Bay was filled with architecturally significant structures that Stewart felt “represent part of Texas heritage that should be preserved for future generations.”\textsuperscript{7} Despite the historic and aesthetic value of many of the properties, property values and the reputation of the neighborhood had been dwindling for years. Motivated property owners believed that by establishing a historic district and empowering a historical commission to regulate exterior modifications to property, the neighborhood could be rejuvenated and encourage tourism on Galveston Island.\textsuperscript{8}

Although many GHF members resided in the area identified by Brindley and Stewart and keenly supported the project, GHF leaders wisely believed the property owners should control their own organization. Brindley wrote in a letter to friend and colleague Hellen Duprey Bullock at the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

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4 GHF Minutes, February 3, 1957, Box 1, GHS Records.
5 GHF Minutes, February 16, 1958 Meeting.
6 Anne Ammons Brindley, interview by Mary Margaret Love, January 30, 1981, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC.
7 “Questions and Answers About the Old Galveston Quarter,” Old Galveston Quarter Subject File, GTHC.
8 “Questions and Answers about the Old Galveston Quarter.”
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I do believe the Old Galveston Quarter may become a reality. . . . I believe we were smart in leaving it up to the property owners living in the Quarter to elect officers, their own Board and run affairs in general. Otherwise, they would have felt the Galveston Historical Foundation was trying to put things over on them.  

In early 1962 Stewart introduced a bill in the Texas Legislature to allow for the legal establishment of a historical district in Galveston’s East End. The legislation, H.B. 108, passed and was signed by Governor Price Daniel in early February. It required 500 property owners residing in the proposed district to sign a petition calling for a referendum on the establishment of an Old Galveston Quarter. Modeled closely after the Vieux Carre Commission established in the 1930s to preserve the French Quarter in New Orleans, the Old Galveston Quarter plan established a historical district, a property owners association, and a historical commission that would work together to stop the deterioration of the neighborhood and encourage positive physical improvements to historic structures. The five-person commission would be appointed by the governor and be composed of one representative each from the Chamber of Commerce, the Galveston Convention and Tourist Bureau, and Galveston architects, and two representatives from the Galveston Historical Foundation. A full-time managing director would be hired and paid for by Galveston County to assist residents with “plans for betterments, alterations, improvements, and new construction.”  

Residents could not be forced to make repairs, nor would they be prohibited from remodeling, adding on, or rebuilding their homes.

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9 Letter from Anne A. Brindley to Helen Duprey Dullock, March 22, 1962, Box 1, Anne Ammons Brindley Papers MS#94-0002, GTHC.
10 “Questions and Answers about the Old Galveston Quarter.”
When making changes to the exterior, however, the plans would have to receive commission approval.¹¹

Supporters of the Old Galveston Quarter did not waste time. The Texas Secretary of State approved the Old Galveston Quarter Property Owner’s Association’s charter on February 9, 1962, and temporary officers — president Phil Stovall, vice-president Mrs. Howard Wyatt, and secretary-treasurer Mildred Robertson — began to organize supporters for the signature drive.¹² Approximately fifty property owners attended the first official Old Galveston Quarter Property Owner’s Association meeting on February 28, 1962, at the home of A. J. Cuchia. They elected a nine-member board of directors, including Dr. A. O. Singleton, R. H. Rigdon, Dr. E. R. Thompson, C. T. Wade, A. J. Cuchia, Gener Davis, Mrs. Milo Fox, Pat Murphy, and Mrs. H. K. Wyatt. The board elected the permanent officers: president A. J. Cuchia, vice-president Dr. R. H. Rigdon, treasurer Edward Lobit, and secretary Bettie Morrill. Gene Davis was selected to head a petition committee, and Mrs. Jerry Barker was named head of the women’s activities committee.¹³ Representative Stewart continued his involvement by serving with Jerry Barker and Cuchia on a public information committee and by donating office space and the services of his secretary.¹⁴ Cuchia, Stewart, and other leaders looked to the Vieux Carre district for support and guidance — touring New Orleans and bringing Vieux Carre leaders to the island.¹⁵

¹¹ "Questions and Answers about the Old Galveston Quarter."
¹² Old Galveston Quarter Property Owner’s Association Charter, Filing Number 0018108401, Texas Secretary of State, Austin, Texas; “Old Galveston Quarter Meet Set Feb. 28,” Galveston Daily News, February 17, 1962.
¹⁴ Ibid.; Brindley, interview.
The Old Galveston Quarter Property Owners’ Association embarked eagerly on their signature drive. They received publicity in the *Galveston Daily News* and made plans for door-to-door canvassing of the district. The group also mailed letters written by Maco Stewart discussing the Old Galveston Quarter commission and how the establishment of the historical district would benefit area homeowners. Because supporters battled rumors and misinformation spread throughout town, Stewart and the public information committee included a frequently asked questions handout in the mailing.  

Not all residents of the Old Galveston Quarter area responded positively to the plans for the historic district. Criticism was not directed in opposition to the idea of a historic district but instead focused on the specifics of the commission’s organization. Immediately after news that the bill passed the state legislature, Jerry Barker commented to the *Daily News* that the district’s property owners believed that the city planning commission should be consulted and preservation efforts coordinated. Barker must have reconciled his opinions, because a short time later he served as legal council to the property owners association and worked actively for the formation of the district. Although Stewart and his supporters equated the Old Galveston Quarter with the successful Vieux Carre district in New Orleans, city planning director Joe N. Impey disagreed with the comparison. Again, the criticism was not directed toward the idea of


18 Ibid.; “Cuchia heads Old Galveston Area Board.”
forming a historic district in Galveston's East End; rather, Impey objected to the lack of cooperation between the city and the proposed commission. He believed the creation of something so important to the island’s future should be organized out of a thorough city planning study and not a “hurried legislative act.”

Impey also pointed out to Galvestonians that the “bill does not provide for the same local controls as are contained in the Louisiana bill, and that the character of the area is not the same.” He disagreed with granting the Old Galveston Quarter Commission the power to regulate the hours and type of businesses in the district because to do so would conflict with zoning powers belonging to the city government. Impey invited the supporters of the Quarter to work with the city so that a proper, comprehensive, and cooperative plan could be worked out.

The Old Galveston Quarter Property Owners Association members listened to their critics. They realized that both the city’s government and citizens needed to support the Quarter if it was to thrive. State Senator A.R. “Babe” Schwartz introduced amendments to the original Old Galveston Quarter bill in March 13, 1963. The amendments allowed the bill “to conform more closely to existing state statues and ordinances of the city of Galveston.” It also reduced the number of signatures required to call the election, and after presenting a petition containing more than 400 signatures of the 525 district property owners, the special election was set for November 23, 1963.

That did not mean the plan’s supporters were in for smooth sailing. Without any prior

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
warning and only one week before the election, the city planning commission and City Council issued a negative report on the Quarter initiative. The Galveston News, once a supporter of the plan, withdrew support as well. Specifically, the city objected to the sole power of the five-person commission in rejecting and approving construction and remodeling plans and believed that the requirement that new structures be historically appropriate and the high cost of such construction would stunt growth in the area. Simply put, critics did not believe the plan was workable.24 Supporters continued to believe that the Old Galveston Quarter would inspire residents to clean up the neighborhood, raise property values, and bring much needed attention to the importance of Galveston to Texas’ architectural history. They would have to wait to prove it, however.

The special election for property owners of the proposed Old Galveston Quarter was held on Saturday, November 23, 1963. Galvestonians, like millions of Americans stunned by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy only the day before, stayed home. Only 186 voters came to the polls, and the Old Galveston Quarter plan was defeated with a vote of 120 against to 66 for. The Old Galveston Quarter Property Owner’s Association expressed disappointment in the results, but R. H. Rigdon, the group’s president, stated “We hope those successful in this election will do something constructive for maintaining the historical attributes of Galveston.”25 The idea for a historical district in Galveston’s East End would not die, and in 1971 the area did become Galveston’s first local historic district. The struggle over the Old Galveston Quarter

reveals that, sometimes, timing is everything. The city government and Galvestonians were not quite ready for the responsibility (and perhaps success) of a historical district commission. Supporters thought big with their plans for the Old Galveston Quarter, and they wanted to work quickly. It was perhaps too much for Galvestonians who had not yet bought in to the idea of historic preservation as an economic boon. Nevertheless, had the election been rescheduled and held on another day, when the civic-minded were not preoccupied with grief, it is debatable whether the election’s outcome would have been different.

In the early 1960s, Galvestonians still could not fully recognize the architectural treasures that their city contained. Despite the work of Brindley, GHF, and those who fought for the Old Galveston Quarter, it took the publication of *The Galveston that Was* by Howard Barnstone for many islanders to take an interest in the history surrounding them. Barnstone had moved to Houston in 1948 to join the architecture department at the University of Houston. He and his wife, artist Gertrude Levy, enjoyed making daytrips to Galveston, where they would take pleasure in discovering the old homes and architectural surprises. Peter Brink wrote about Barnstone and his love for Galveston in an afterword for the reissue of *The Galveston That Was* in 1993:

Barnstone loved the architecture. The romantic allusions throughout the designs fitted perfectly with his penchant for the nostalgic. Stumbling upon these neglected beauties satisfied his theory that one comes upon the work of the Muse unexpectedly. With characteristic exuberance, he would dash from one building to the next, trying to grasp all of the pleasures available. Barnstone also loved the drama associated with the old wealthy families of Galveston and the leading roles they played in the intrigue
of Galveston's economic and political life. For him it was high theater — and it only added to Galveston's allure.26

At some point in the late 1950s, Barnstone began to envision a book that would record for posterity the beautiful nineteenth-century structures. He initially envisioned spending nine to twelve months preparing architectural drawings and text that would be published with images from a "first class architectural photographer."27 By early 1961 Barnstone had convinced Houston businessman and art collector John de Menil to back his project. Menil had also convinced James Johnson Sweeney to accept the directorship of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), and Menil most likely introduced Sweeney to Barnstone’s project. In June 1962 the MFAH announced that it would use "a book on the disappearing architecture of Galveston — the 19th-century architecture principally, which is being demolished so quickly," to begin a new publications series.28

To fulfill his goal of including high-quality images, Barnstone entered negotiations with well-known architectural photographer Ezra Stoller in March 1962. Menil had other ideas and instead contacted his friend and famed photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson about the project. The choice to select the photojournalist and portrait photographer Cartier-Bresson was in many ways curious. His work appeared in important museums and publications throughout the U.S. and Europe. He had won prestigious photographic awards, and, as Peter Brink wrote, "His life represented an unending quest for expression and communication through art."29 In short, taking photographs of old

27 Brink, 222n10.
28 Brink, 213.
29 Brink, 214.
Galveston buildings was not his type of photography. Nevertheless, because of Menil’s involvement, Cartier-Bresson accepted the job. He spent ten days in early May 1962 photographing the city with Barnstone. Barnstone believed that the unique way Cartier-Bresson framed Galveston’s dilapidated treasures would allow Galvestonians to see the structures in a fresh, new way and bring national attention to the island.\textsuperscript{30}

Cartier-Bresson wanted to be the sole photographer for the project and felt that his images sufficiently covered the subject. But after examining the prints and discussing it with the University of Texas Press, which had expressed interest in the project, Barnstone, Sweeney, and Menil agreed that the book needed additional architectural photographs. By November, Menil and Barnstone had persuaded Cartier-Bresson to agree to the addition of architectural photographs by Ezra Stoller. Stoller completed the majority of his work during a nine-day trip to the city in March 1963.\textsuperscript{31}

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston signed a publishing contract with the Macmillan Company in June 1964. Yale University Press had rejected a draft manuscript in November 1963, and after discussions with both Macmillian and the University of Texas Press, Barnstone and MFAH director Sweeney decided to work with a non-academic press. The book was scheduled for release in January 1966.\textsuperscript{32}

Over the next two years, Barnstone spoke publicly about the pending publication of \textit{The Galveston That Was} and about the deterioration of Galveston’s architectural treasures. Barnstone announced the book’s publication in a feature article in the \textit{Galveston Daily News} on December 22, 1964. He stressed that Galvestonians, in their “rush of progress and building,” needed to remember to protect the historic buildings that

\textsuperscript{30}Brink, 214-16.
\textsuperscript{31}Brink, 214, 216-17.
\textsuperscript{32}Brink 218.
had come to define the city's style. A year later, as the publication date neared, Barnstone refined his stump speech to include a solution to the problem of Galveston’s array of dilapidated buildings with great detail and historic value. Speaking to the Galveston Rotary Club luncheon on November 2, 1965, Barnstone said, “You can’t keep old buildings as corpses” and proposed the idea of renovating structures to house a “great university.” The university would provide an impetus to restore the historical area, employment for residents, and students who could boost the winter economy. The island already hosted the University of Texas Medical Branch, but a full university would bring many more people to the island. Barnstone expanded on the “Great University” plan at a lecture and autograph party held at Trinity Episcopal Church on Sunday, December 19, 1965. More than three hundred people attended the book signing and reception. At the event, Barnstone emphasized to his audience:

You can’t save [historical buildings] just because you want a historical society to buy them and run them into a bunch of corpses. . . . There’s not enough money to buy them. And I do not think that’s the way to save them — the only way is to use them and if you don’t have a use, manufacture one.

Little came of Barnstone’s idea, and it faded with the release of *The Galveston That Was*. Peter Brink later categorized the reaction of islanders to Barnstones’ “great university” suggestion as “polite disinterest.”

*The Galveston That Was* appeared in December 1965 and received positive press in both Houston newspapers, both Dallas papers, and even the *New York Times*. Each of

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35 Brink, 218.
37 Brink, 219.
these reviews praised the photographs and, more importantly, focused attention on Galveston’s architectural treasures. James C. Massey, supervisory architect of the National Park Service and the Historic American Buildings Survey, reviewed the book in the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s magazine, *Historic Preservation*. Massey praised the book and hoped that it would “boost the significance of Galveston’s historic landmarks and create the favorable public attitudes and interest essential for a successful community preservation program.”

Galvestonians, though, did not respond so favorably. Some felt that the selection of photographs, particularly those by Henri Cartier-Bresson, highlighted only shabby, neglected structures and implied collectively that Galvestonians did not care about their city. The images brought attention to the architectural riches of one of Texas’ most historic cities, but they also seemed to focus almost exclusively on the most ramshackle and dilapidated homes and buildings. This was not the Galveston concerned citizens wanted to reveal to the state and nation. Galvestonians took issue with Barnstone’s introduction, specifically his claim that the city failed to prosper in the twentieth century because of specific decisions made Galveston’s leaders. Barnstone ruminated about the reasons twentieth-century Galveston failed to become “the great city of the Gulf Coast.” He wrote:

Galveston had the banks, the buildings, the shipping facilities, the port, and the international representatives necessary to trade, both private and governmental. It had men with the necessary stature and power to package the

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38 Brink, 219-20.
oil deal and to sell Galveston as the obvious oil city. Yet it was to Houston that the new industry was forced to look.

At this point, the facts lead to a conjecture that cannot be documented and is unsupportable at the present time. It has been stated that at the turn of the century, a combine of Galveston’s leaders consciously bottled up available real estate and financing and arbitrarily decided to remain the big frogs in the little pond. After all, life would remain sweeter and less arduous as they basked in their honeysuckle-scented gardens. . . .

It is too easy to say that Houston businessmen were more aggressive in welcoming the newborn industry, or that they were simply capitalizing on the lethargy of Galveston. It was a conscious freeze-out. Houston wooed and Houston won. Galveston, the logical suitor, did not even bother to pay court.41

The Galveston Daily News did not review The Galveston That Was, but it did publish an editorial on Monday, January 21, 1966, addressing the book and Barnstone himself. Acknowledging the text as “handsomely printed and illustrated” and recognizing it as “an interesting and perhaps significant volume,” the News encouraged Galvestonians to “keep in mind clearly what the book is and what it isn’t.” The editorial noted, in particular, that Barnstone was “a brilliant architect and an artist” but not a “realistic businessman and city builder.” It stated:

Reminding Galveston of its past lethargies, of its missed economic, social and business opportunities — incidental as this is to the main purpose of the book — is painful. But such reminders are helpful and timely. We are enabled to see not just the potential that we HAD and somehow missed but more importantly the potential that we HAVE today. . . The Galveston that is — here in 1966 — must not miss the boat again Signs multiply yearly that the Galveston that is won’t.42

41 Barnstone, 13-14.
Galvestonians may not have liked what Bamstone was saying about their city and their ancestors, but they took notice. In the years following the book’s publication, the city’s preservationists made great strides as longtime residents began to listen and, more importantly, to take action to prevent the loss of Galveston’s history.

By January 1966 the Galveston Historical Foundation had taken a few more steps toward protecting the city’s architectural assets, and civic leaders were about to embark on their second major project: an architectural survey of the city. At the June 7, 1965, executive board meeting of GHF, “a group of enthusiastic Galvestonians” petitioned the board “to form a committee to acquire and preserve old buildings.” GHF President Mrs. G. Harold Jordan (Maybelle) announced at a late August meeting of the board the creation of a new Acquisition and Preservation Committee to be headed by Ray C. Wilson. The committee consisted of five married couples (Mr. and Mrs. Ray C. Wilson, Dr. and Mrs. John McGivney, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Steph (Patti), Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Eisenhour (Virginia), Dr. and Mrs. A.O. Singleton, Jr.) and nine women (Mrs. Mike Gaido (Maureen Elizabeth “Kewpie”), Mrs. Rai B. Kelso, Mrs. D. O. Grice, Mrs. Joe C. Blackshear, Mrs. William L. Wall, Mrs. Carey T. Mayfield, Mrs. William B. Smith, Mrs. E.Y. Stoff, and Mrs. John Wallace (Sally)). The new committee first met during the second week of November. Wilson reported to the Galveston Daily News that the committee intended to be “a real active group that is going to really do something about preservation of old Galveston properties of historical value.” The committee did not delay, and Wilson announced on December 3 that the group was actively trying to raise

43 GHF Executive Board Meeting Minutes, June 7, 1965, Box 1, Galveston Historical Foundation Administrative Records MS#87-0019 (hereafter cited as GHF Admin Records), GTHC.
funds in order to purchase and restore a vacant historic home.\textsuperscript{45} Nothing came from this initial project, except perhaps interesting conversation and ideas for the future, and GHF leaders focused their efforts on a much more significant venture.

On Tuesday, May 31, 1966, the Foundation hosted a luncheon at Gaido’s Seafood Restaurant for members and representatives from the city government and the Chamber of Commerce. The program featured talks by James C. Massey, supervisory architect of the National Park Service, John C. Garner, field director of the Texas Architecture Survey, and Donald Streeter, a preservation consultant from New Jersey. These presentations unveiled the reasoning in favor of conducting a historical survey for Galveston. GHF leaders Anne A. Brindley, Sally Wallace, and Patti Steph had attended a conference on historic preservation at Houston Baptist University in spring 1966 at which Garner had spoken. After meeting Garner, the GHF members first considered the idea of an architectural inventory for the island.\textsuperscript{46} Massey stated that a historical survey of important Galveston structures and the history of their occupants could ultimately encourage tourism and be a benefit for the city. Garner spoke on the details. The first step would be to identify specific sites through “a street by street superficial survey” and then have the National Park Service produce a “photo data book” about the sites. Finally, an architect would make measured drawings to further document the structures. The meeting closed with “a bombardment of enthusiastic questions and discussion.”\textsuperscript{47} The \textit{Galveston Daily News} came out in support of a coordinated effort to preserve the island’s

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\textsuperscript{46} Brindley, interview; Sally Wallace, interview by Mary Margaret Love, October 1, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC; Edward “Tim” R. Thompson, Jr., interview by Mary Margaret Love, November 20, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC.
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history and also to educate Galvestonians and visitor alike about "the colorful history of our Island City."  

Encouraged by the response at the May 31 luncheon and the support of the community, GHF’s leadership voted to take steps toward commissioning a historical architectural building survey. The group appointed a committee consisting of Patti Steph, Dr. Raymond H. Rigdon, Edward “Tim” R. Thompson, Jr., Kewpie Gaido, and Anne Brindley to meet with John C. Garner and develop a proposal to be presented to GHF members and city residents. The plan was unveiled to the executive board and trustees of GHF on June 28. Its approval was reported in the Galveston News the following day. Garner and the committee envisioned a four-stage project that would produce “a permanent and authenticated record of historic Galveston sites.” Stage one would be a general survey of every building in the city by Garner and would provide a summary of all historic buildings. During stage two, he would prepare Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) inventory forms for about one hundred of the island’s most significant structures. In stage three, photographs of both the interior and exterior and historical records related to approximately thirty buildings would be collected to complete HABS photo data sheets. Garner anticipated completing this work before February 1, 1967, so that the fourth and final stage — the completion of measured drawings of fifteen to twenty buildings by architects from the National Park Service — could be finished during the summer of 1967 or 1968. The committee and Garner estimated the cost of the survey project at $13,000, with $3,000 necessary for Garner to begin the initial work. GHF

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50 GHF Executive Board Meeting, June 28, 1966, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
organized a Citizens Survey Committee to generate support for the project throughout the city and raise funds.\textsuperscript{51} The preliminary inventory was scheduled to begin October 1, and the committee formally embarked on the fundraising campaign August 15. With the support of the Galveston Chamber of Commerce, GHF sought individual donations through personal contacts, brochures distributed to members of Galveston organizations, and newspaper coverage. The Foundation also sought support by applying for federal grants from the National Park Service.\textsuperscript{52}

Galvestonians opened their wallets for the Historic Architecture Inventory, and by the time Garner began work on Monday, October 3, $11,700 of the $13,000 required had been raised. Individual donations totaled $3,700, and two local foundations, the Eliza and Harris Kempner Fund and the Moody Foundation, donated $3,000 and $4,000, respectively, toward the project. The Historic American Buildings Survey Committee donated $1,000 for the project initially but assured GHF leaders of additional assistance as needed. Local groups, including the City Council, city planning commission, Chamber of Commerce, the Galveston Junior League, the Friends of the Rosenberg Library, and the Board of Administrators of Bishop’s Palace expressed support. As the survey began, Tim Thompson, chair of GHF’s inventory committee, stated to the \textit{News}, “The committee feels that this generous response to its efforts to raise the money is a great show of enthusiasm on the part of Galvestonians to begin a program of preservation for


our historical Nineteenth Century Architecture, much of which is still with us. We are greatly encouraged as the inventory work starts.\textsuperscript{53}

Garner completed phase one of the survey by October, photographing and cataloging seven hundred buildings during that time. In the second phase, finished in mid-December, Garner supervised the completion of HABS forms documenting the location, architect, owner, and general history of 150 structures. Garner later stated that collecting historical information about buildings in Galveston was easier than anywhere else in Texas because of the resources housed at the Rosenberg Library and the large number of families with nineteenth-century roots still living on the island.\textsuperscript{54}

That winter, Garner narrowed the list of 150 historical buildings from the second phase of the project to 25 for the phase three. With the assistance of a professional photographer, he prepared photo data books recording the history of the following structures: the Bishop's Palace (1402 Broadway), J.C. Trube House (1627 Sealy), the Federal Custom House (1927 Post Office), Ashton Villa (2328 Broadway), George Ball House (1405 24\textsuperscript{th} Street), Michael B. Menard House (1605 33\textsuperscript{rd} Street), Old Powhatan House (3427 Avenue O), Wilbur Cherry House (1602 Church), George W. Grover House (1520 Market), First Presbyterian Church (1903 Church), St. Mary's Cathedral (2011 Church), Trinity Episcopal Church (701 22\textsuperscript{nd} Street), Eaton Memorial Chapel (721 22\textsuperscript{nd} Street), George Sealy House (2424 Broadway), Samuel May Williams House (3601 Avenue P), University of Texas Medical Department Building “Old Red” (902-928 Strand), Galveston News Building (2108 Mechanic), Henley Building (2002-2016 Strand), H. M.


Truehardt Building (212 22nd Street), Henry Landes House (1604 Post Office), J.L.
Darragh House (1823 Post Office), Morris Sydnor-Heidenheimer House (1602 Sealy),
Henry Rosenberg House (1306 Market), and the Henry Marritz House (1103 33rd Street).
With assistance from the National Park Service, four architecture students under the
direction of Texas A&M Professor Melvin M. Rotsch spent the summer completing
measured drawings of nine of Galveston's most historic buildings. The students,
including two Galvestonians studying at Texas A&M, worked out of an office in the
Custom House and spent the summer making careful drawings of floor plans, cross-
sections, exteriors, and architectural details. Theoretically, the drawings provided enough
detail so that the structures could be reconstructed. Galveston's Historic Architecture
Survey came to completion in the fall of 1967, and Garner deposited the results in the
HABS archive at the Library of Congress and Galveston's Rosenberg Library.55

The Historic Architecture Survey did more for Galveston than provide an archive
of architectural and historical material about the island's buildings. Most importantly, it
rallied the community in support of the city's historical treasures and laid the foundation
for future preservation projects. In addition, the survey brought increased attention to
Galveston by state and national preservation advocates. Garner spoke at GHF's annual
meeting on February 2, 1967, and enthusiastically revealed how the city could use his
work as a springboard for a larger preservation movement that would boost tourism and
the reputation of Galveston in the national preservation movement. Garner praised GHF

55 Mayo, "Isle Historical Survey Near Completion of Second Phase"; Diane Casler, "Isle History Group
Picks Study Sites," Galveston Daily News, March 9, 1967; Helen Coombs, "Foundation Completes Isle
for organizing and implementing "one of the most thorough city-wide architectural surveys that has yet been attempted in this country." He continued:

The Galveston inventory has been commended by the National Park Service as a model program for communities throughout the country. Galveston has certainly distinguished itself by supporting the inventory, no other community in Texas has attempted such an ambitious program. . . . Yours is the first effort in the direction and if present indications hold true, it will establish a precedent for historic preservation activity in this state.\(^\text{56}\)

Garner then spoke frankly about the future of GHF and what it could do for the city. He urged members to think carefully about the Foundation’s role: "By the name you have chosen for yourselves, however, you imply that your program is all encompassing and that the GHF serves as the historical body of this city."\(^\text{57}\) Garner did not believe, however, that the members had fully accepted this position. He urged them to recognize, from the support given to them for the survey project, that “you have received an invitation from this community to accept the leading role in its preservation activities and to develop into the representative organization that Galveston so vitally needs.”\(^\text{58}\) Should GHF decide to accept its role as a preservation leader, Garner strongly recommended that they work with the city and other community organizations to increase communication and cooperation among the various groups working for the betterment of Galveston. He closed his talk with the realization:

You face not only a commitment to one historic house, but there is a claim placed on you by the whole body of Galveston historic architecture. . . . this claim can be satisfied in only two ways, refuse it or accept it. I urge you to accept it."\(^\text{59}\)

\(^{57}\) Ibid.  
\(^{58}\) Ibid.  
\(^{59}\) Ibid.
Garner’s speech was yet another wake-up call for the city, and Galvestonians were beginning to pay attention, slowly but surely.

By the time Garner made his speech in 1967, a national movement for historic preservation had exploded and, in response, the federal government responded to the desire of Americans to protect their cultural and historic heritage with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In early September 1963, 160 people met at the Williamsburg, Virginia, “Seminar on Preservation and Restoration” hosted by Colonial Williamsburg and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The goal of the meeting was “to review the history of preservation in America (including its European background), to analyze its philosophical basis, examine its present effectiveness, and to discuss ideal ways to shape its future.”60 Conference officials presented a report of their findings and conclusion, “Principles and Guidelines for Historic Preservation in the United States,” at the October 1964 annual meeting of the National Trust. In 1966 they published the proceedings and the conclusions as the volume titled Historic Preservation Today.61 Inspired by the work of the 1963 seminar and the May 1965 White House Conference on Natural Beauty, the United States Conference of Mayors established a Special Committee on Historic Preservation to further examine the status of historic preservation in the U.S. at the time. With a grant from the Ford Foundation and institutional assistance from the National Trust, the Special Committee on Historic

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Preservation published *With Heritage so Rich* in January 1966. The book's "Findings and Recommendations Section," a sort of call to action for the federal government, suggested "a reorientation of outlook and effort" for the historic preservation movement. It stated, "If the preservation movement is to be successful, it must go beyond saving bricks and mortar. . . . It must do more than revere a few precious national shrines. It must attempt to give a sense of orientation to our society, using structures and objects of the past to establish values of time and place."

The text also outlined recommendations on how the federal government could aid in the preservation movement. Echoing ideas also expressed in *Historic Preservation Today, With Heritage So Rich* called for a national register of significant landmarks, a better partnership between local, state, and federal agencies, and the establishment of a historic preservation advisory council. It also suggested tax credits and other financial incentives to encourage preservation projects.

Government officials liked what they read and included many of the recommendations and ideas of *With Heritage So Rich* in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the act into law on October 15. The law recognized the importance of the nation's historic past and declared "that the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people."

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that, although the major burdens of historic preservation have been borne and major efforts initiated by private agencies and individuals, and both should continue to play a vital role, it is nevertheless necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to accelerate its historic preservation programs and activities, to give maximum encouragement to agencies and individuals undertaking preservation by private means, and to assist State and local governments and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities.\textsuperscript{66}

The act established a National Register of Historic Places to document (and indirectly protect) "sites, buildings, objects, districts and structures significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture."\textsuperscript{67} It also authorized federal grants to states and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to aid in preservation projects and encouraged the establishment of state preservation agencies. It established the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to advise the president and Congress on preservation matters and also direct the Department of the Interior and the Department of Housing and Urban Development when dealing with historic or culturally significant property, specifically those on the National Register or those eligible for inclusion.\textsuperscript{68}

Perhaps most significant, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 revolutionized the historic preservation movement by refocusing efforts not only on documented historic buildings but by officially encouraging historic preservationists to consider "districts." The act formally defined the term "historic preservation" to "[include] the protection, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture,

\textsuperscript{68} "The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966," 178-79; Murtagh, 66-68; Tyler, 45.
Before 1966, preservationists focused mainly on saving specific buildings or landmarks with documented historical significance. Only a few local groups, such as those in Charleston and New Orleans, had been successful in protecting entire districts. The new act put a special emphasis on the importance of the landscape and maintaining specific landmarks and the communities around them because a historical district can educate the American public about its past far better than isolated treasures. This idea came directly from *With Heritage so Rich*, which urged "the new preservation must look beyond the individual building and individual landmark and concern itself with the historic and architecturally valued areas and districts that contain a special meaning for a community." Galvestonians had attempted to do just that with the Old Galveston Quarter. Although that plan failed to be implemented, the work of Garner and GHF in the mid-1960s was inspired by this redefinition of historic preservation. Historic districts were the future of the historic preservation movement, and they played a central role in the future success of GHF.

As Garner suggested in his 1967 Annual Meeting Address, GHF ultimately agreed to take on the role as coordinator of historic preservation for Galveston. He announced that the Foundation had retained his services for a "historic district feasibility study" in March 1967, but leaders were still working on the details in order to prepare a comprehensive preservation plan the following year. Garner and GHF leaders such as Anne Brindley, Patti Steph, Sally Wallace, Tim Thompson, and Robert Nesbitt realized the importance of using the Historic Architecture Buildings Survey as the stepping-off

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70 Murtagh, 66; Tyler, 45, 48.
point for a larger urban renewal and preservation project. These leaders also recognized that GHF could not do it alone. Preservation in Galveston would have to be a cooperative effort between the city local organizations, such as GHF and the Chamber of Commerce. GHF could not demand that the city planning commission tackle preservation, but, as stated in the executive board meeting minutes from January 24, 1967, “Should urban renewal become a reality, we should be prepared with a plan that would coordinate activities in preservation and seek unity of purpose.”

Leaders proposed a Galveston Historic Resources Project to prepare a “comprehensive plan for historic restoration.” Officers agreed to hire a director, assistant director, and secretary to head the project, and the Moody Foundation granted an initial $15,000 to get things up and running. This new effort continued to develop throughout 1968, and in May 1969 GHF finalized contracts with Garner, his wife and assistant Rochelle, and Donald B. Myer, a Washington, D.C., architect and former Assistant Secretary of the United States Commission of Fine Arts.

GHF initially intended the Historic Resources Project to be a joint venture with the Galveston County Historical Survey Committee, a county committee organized as part of the larger Texas Historical Survey Committee in the late 1950s. The Galveston branch of the committee was dedicated to preparing the paperwork and documentation required for placing state historical markers, but “they didn’t see fit to cooperate” with GHF. The Foundation also sought and received endorsement for the project from the

73 GHF Executive Board Meeting Minutes, January 24, 1968, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
74 Ibid.
75 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, February 28, 1968, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
76 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, May 7, 1969, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
77 GHF Executive Board Meeting Minutes, January 24, 1968.
Citizen's Planning Committee, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Junior League of Galveston.\textsuperscript{78}

Official work by the Garners and Myer on the Preservation Program did not begin until the summer of 1969. During the eighteen months before Garner's next project started, GHF faced an important and unexpected preservation battle, one similar to the challenge that had been posed by the Samuel May Williams House years earlier. One of Galveston's most historically significant homes, Ashton Villa, the John M. Brown Mansion at 2328 Broadway, faced destruction. The battle over Ashton Villa caused the Galveston city government to intervene to help save the mansion and resulted in city officials finally recognizing the need for a historical district plan for Galveston. The timing of the Ashton Villa crisis proved fortuitous because it made the work of Garner and Meyer that much more significant; for the first time, Galveston was ready to seriously consider a wide-ranging preservation plan.

James M. Brown, born September 22, 1821, in New York, moved to Galveston in 1843. He established himself on the island as a successful businessman, and five years after his arrival he was elected as alderman to the City Council. Also in 1848, he married Rebecca Ashton Stoddart Rhodes with whom he would father five children — John Stoddart, Moreau Roberts, Rebecca Ashton (Bettie), Charles Rhodes, and Mathilda Ella Brown. In 1859 James M. Brown's partner in the wholesale hardware business, Stephen Kirkland, died. Brown closed the successful Brown and Kirkland Hardware Store and accepted the position as president of the Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railroad. Under Brown's supervision, the railroad bridge linking the island with the mainland was completed in 1860, and the Galveston, Houston, and Henderson Railroad connected

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
Galveston to the Texas rail system. After the Civil War, he resigned from the railroad and re-entered the wholesale hardware business. By 1870 he was one of the richest men in the state, reporting in the 1870 census $175,000 in real estate and $100,000 in personal property. Brown’s hardware business thrived; and he entered other ventures, serving as director and president of the First National Bank of Galveston and the Galveston Wharves Company. He also involved himself in the Galveston gas and light company and in the construction of the city’s waterworks.  

On January 6, 1859, James M. Brown purchased four lots on the north side of Broadway between 23rd and 24th Streets for $4,000 and commenced building his family’s home, Ashton Villa. Brown adapted the plan from a design in architect Samuel Sloan’s text, The Model Architect, and constructed what architectural historians Stephen Fox and Ellen Beasley defined as “the grandest, most stylistically current house in Texas at the time it was completed.” Brown named his home, “Ashton” after his wife’s ancestors and “Villa” in honor of its innovative Italianate style. On the island, the Greek Revival style (identified by symmetrical shapes, porticos, low-pitched roofs, and columns) ruled, but Brown sought to do something new and modern. Ashton Villa was not only the first Italianate house in Galveston but also one of the first in the whole South. Brown, who trained as a brick mason in his youth, was also the first in Galveston to construct a brick house and the first to use decorative cast iron, a design feature that would become a distinguishing characteristic of Galveston’s luxury mansions. When Ashton Villa was


completed in 1860, it was the first of the grand Broadway mansions that would define Galveston's elegant society, and as one of the most expensive houses built in Texas at that time, it demonstrated to all the wealth and success of James Moreau Brown.81

The Browns occupied Ashton Villa for over seventy years. Eldest son John worked with his father in the family hardware business and in 1870 married and purchased his own home. Second son Moreau left Galveston around the time of his brother’s marriage to study medicine and eventually settled in Chicago. Youngest son Charles attended college in Wisconsin and then worked as an apprentice watchmaker in Philadelphia. He studied stone engraving in Europe and, after a brief stint in the family hardware business, went west to California and later West Texas. Charles eventually returned to Galveston in 1892 and entered the insurance business. Mathilda married in 1884 and moved from Ashton Villa to a home purchased by her father as a wedding present. At the time of James M. Brown’s death on December 25, 1895, Ashton Villa housed only his widow Rebecca, her mother, Sarah Stoddart Rhodes, and the unmarried Bettie. Mathilda and her three children joined the household two years later when she filed for divorce from her abusive husband. The sturdy brick house survived the 1900 Hurricane and served as a refuge for friends and neighbors. As the first decade of the twentieth century came to a close, however, the family’s financial troubles became obvious, and the family hardware business filed for bankruptcy in 1909. Regardless, life at Ashton Villa continued, and the sisters hosted many social events centered around Mathilda’s only daughter Alice. After Alice’s 1916 marriage, only Bettie and Mathilda

remained in the house. Bettie died in 1920, and Mathilda moved to New Orleans to be with her daughter’s family, leaving the aging Broadway palace empty.\footnote{Brothers Moreau, John, and Charles died in 1904, 1912, and 1916, respectively.}

After Mathilda’s death in 1926, the house was sold to the El Mina Shrine Temple for $36,000, and the story of the Brown family in Galveston came to an end.\footnote{“Shrine Purchases Brown Homestead,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, December 29, 1927.} Finalizing the purchase in December 1927, the Shriners converted the home’s rooms into offices and meeting spaces. They erected what was termed in 1928 “a beautiful electrically lighted sign” over the door and made plans for the construction of a large rear ballroom.\footnote{Lillian E. Herz, “Colonial Mansion is to Be Converted into Shrine Home,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, January 1, 1928.} Ironically, later in the mid-twentieth century, the neon sign blazing “El Mina Shrine Temple” with a lighted Shrine symbol placed over the door of the once-grand mansion symbolized the decline of the neighborhood and the end of the Grand Galveston Era.

In late June 1968 the Shrine potentate announced that Ashton Villa was for sale at a price of $200,000, if purchased within ninety days. The Shriners needed additional space and intended to either construct a new facility on property purchased with the money from the sale or to tear down Ashton Villa and rebuild on Broadway.\footnote{Jim Holman, “El Mina Shrine Temple for Sale,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, June 22, 1968.} The historical significance of the El Mina Shrine Temple was well documented, and the Shriners themselves recognized that by offering tours of the former Brown Home to historically minded groups. Galveston’s 1936 Historic American Buildings Survey documented the home and kept its architectural records in the Library of Congress. The building received “Texas Historic Landmark” status in 1962, and the Galveston County Historical Survey Committee placed an interpretive historical medallion on the structure.
five years later.\(^8^6\) Despite a plea by Galveston historical groups to restore the structure, Ashton Villa was no longer a suitable home for the Shriners and a move needed to be made. Although the group really intended to simply tear down and rebuild, they decided to first offer it for sale. Theoretically, if anyone wanted to save it, they could. If not, temple recorder A. M. White stated, "we will have cleared our conscience," and Ashton Villa would be demolished.\(^8^7\)

Upon learning of the possible destruction of one of Galveston’s architectural and historical treasures, the Galveston Historical Foundation rallied. The board of directors, led by President Robert A. Nesbitt, issued a public statement urging the El Mina Shrine to preserve the house rather than destroy it.\(^8^8\) The Galveston County Historical Survey Committee (GCHSC), dedicated to the protection of Texas’ historic heritage and the erection of historical markers, also spoke out against the destruction. GCHSC went further by announcing their desire "to explore and act on all possible channels to acquire and maintain the building as a historical educational institution."\(^8^9\) GHF was not in a position to try to purchase Ashton Villa. At the time, the group already felt tension between those who believed the Williams House should be GHF’s first priority and those who had branched out into developing a citywide historic preservation program. Regardless, this was a time of crisis. GHF leaders met with representatives of the GCHSC, Galveston’s Beach Parks Board, and the Junior League on Tuesday, July 24, to discuss the situation. The Beach Parks Board informed the group that although its charter allowed it to restore and operate a historic building, it could not purchase one.


\(^8^7\) Holman, "El Mina Shrine Temple for Sale."


But a group of citizen could buy a building and give it to the city, which then could give it to the Beach Parks Board. A few weeks later, State Senator A. R. "Babe" Schwartz announced plans for a county-wide committee working to save Ashton Villa. At the August 20, 1968, meeting, Schwartz and Thomas G. Steph were named co-chairmen, Mrs. Edward Fuggar (Reita) vice-chair, Claude Steele secretary, and Mrs. Louis Pauls (Katherine) treasurer. GHF, GCHSC, the Junior League, the Beach Parks Board, and the Texas State Historical Foundation agreed to help with the committee and assist in developing a purchase and restoration plan. The Committee hired Harvin Moore, a Houston architect and restoration expert, to assess what financial resources would be needed to save the building. Moore completed his appraisal quickly and estimated the cost of Ashton Villa's restoration at $116,765 including the renovation of the building's heating and air conditioning systems. The Beach Parks Board agreed to issue $100,000 in revenue bonds to fund the restoration, and Schwartz and Steph's committee agreed to raise the money for the purchase and to guarantee the sale of the bonds. Both the Beach Parks Board and the Save Ashton Villa Committee appealed to the Galveston City Council in late September. Mayor Edward Schreiber expressed the city's desire to work with the groups to save one of the city's most historic landmarks. Steph proposed to have GHF raise the funds for one-half the purchase price and the city apply for a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant for the other half of the purchase price and half of the renovation costs. Under section 709, Article VII of the Housing Act of 1961, HUD could grant up to $100,000 for the purchase and renovation

of qualified historic properties. The city would own Ashton Villa, the Beach Parks Board would be responsible for its administration, and the Galveston Historical Foundation in cooperation with other historically minded groups could lease it, making GHF responsible for renovations and the site’s general operations. The group did not intend to offer the $200,000 asking price, but instead agreed to offer $100,000, a figure much closer to Ashton Villa’s appraised value.\(^9^3\)

The Trustees of the Shrine voted October 9, 1968, at their convention in Beaumont, Texas, to reject GHF’s $100,000 purchase bid, but GHF and its allies did not give up the fight. Negotiations stalled for the rest of the year, and then on February 11, 1969, the front page of the *Galveston Daily News* declared “Eminent Domain of Ashton Villa May be Declared.” The article revealed that if upcoming meetings between the Save Ashton Villa Committee and Shriners leaders failed and purchase price could not be agreed upon, the committee would ask the City Council to condemn the property and force a sale on the basis of the city’s right of eminent domain over historic and educational property.\(^9^4\) The article, however, stressed this as only a last ditch effort, and later that week, Tom Steph addressed the City Council. After reading letters of support by GHF and other state and national preservation groups, he cited concerns that any threat of condemnation might ruin the already tenacious talks and asked that the city table any action on Ashton Villa. Steph also asked that the city refuse any demolition permits applied for by the El Mina Shrine Temple.\(^9^5\)

\(^9^3\) “Save Villa Grant to be Requested,” *Galveston Daily News*, September 27, 1968; “Proposal for Purchase and Restoration of Ashton Villa (J.M. Brown House),” Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
The renewed negotiation meetings did not go well for the preservationists. Although the Shriners lowered their price to $175,000, it was still beyond the means of the Committee to Save Ashton Villa and GHF. Furthermore, GHF leaders believed that the Shriners would not compromise on any lesser offer. GHF visionary Patti Steph (wife of Tom Steph, the co-chair of the Save Ashton Villa Committee) reported at the March 17, 1969, GHF Board of Directors meeting that efforts toward purchasing Ashton Villa "[seem] to be a little bleak and virtually at a standstill." The Shriners were done negotiating; it had been nine months since they issued their ninety-day ultimatum. Following the February meeting with the preservationists, the Shriners general membership voted to withdraw from any sale negotiations and take the house off the market. In a bold step, the Shrine Building Committee announced to the Galveston Daily News that it was taking bids for Ashton Villa's demolition and that work would begin in sixty days.

GHF again revved up its organizational machine and pressed on. The group had been working for years with John Garner on the HABS and, in late spring 1969, was in the process of contracting with him to develop a comprehensive Historic District Plan for the city. The destruction of Ashton Villa would permanently alter the historical landscape that Garner intended on defining. At a special workshop session of the Galveston City Council, GHF proposed an ordinance that would prevent the demolition of Galveston buildings one hundred or more years old that held either Texas State Historical Medallions or had been included in the HABS with measured drawings in the Library of Congress. This ordinance would only be temporary and in effect for six

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96 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, March 17, 1969, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
months until a formal plan detailing the establishment of protected historical districts could be developed and proposed to the city's Planning and Zoning Commissions. The city council passed the ordinance, meaning that the eight structures that satisfied the requirements (the Menard House, the Ball House, the Rosenberg House, the Williams Tucker House, the Powhatan House, St. Mary's Cathedral, Trinity Episcopal Church, and, most importantly, Ashton Villa) were safe from destruction until at least December 1, 1969.

In June 1969 news that HUD had awarded the City of Galveston a $107,500 grant to help purchase and restore Ashton Villa reached the island. Sally Wallace and Patti Steph had worked with the city to write and apply for the essential funds. To the Galveston preservationists, the award validated their fight for Ashton Villa, and the money would allow them the means to achieve their goals. As expected, HUD designated $50,000 for the building's purchase and $50,000 for its renovation. HUD also allocated an additional $7,500 in relocation assistance. County Judge Ray Holbrook had restarted discussions with the Shriners in late May and negotiations continued thought the summer. GHF and the Committee to Save Ashton Villa raised their offer to $125,000, while the Shriners maintained their $175,000 asking price.

By September, leaders from the El Mina Shrine Temple had relaxed their hardline stance and were ready to listen to three types of offers — retaining Ashton Villa and constructing additional facilities on the site, a property exchange for another site on

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100 Linda Westerlage, "Galveston Awarded Ashton Villa Grant," Galveston Daily News, June 24, 1969; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, May 7, 1969; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, June 2, 1969; Beasley and Fox, 57.
Broadway, or a cash offer. Perhaps due to a summer visit by the Imperial Potentate (the leader of the Shriners of North America) or the realization that the preservationists had convinced the city to cooperate with them in the fight to save the historic structure, the Shriners recognized they had limited options and needed to make the best deal that they could. As the negotiations dragged on, GHF and the Committee to Save Ashton Villa worked to raise additional money needed to purchase the structure. The Moody Foundation agreed to grant $60,000, while GHF agreed to raise the $15,000 balance.\textsuperscript{101} HUD originally had placed an October 31 deadline on using its $50,000 in purchase funds, but because the two groups had made positive progress towards agreeing on the sale, the agency granted an extension.\textsuperscript{102}

Two years after the El Mina Shrine put its temple on the market, the sale went through. In late July, the Shine voted to accept the preservationists' $125,000 offer for Ashton Villa, provided the Shrine be allowed to remain in the building until the completion of their new headquarters. El Mina Shrine leader Richard Johnlgan told the \textit{Galveston Daily News} about the deal, "We originally asked $200,000 for it. Through our philanthropist heart we gave them $75,000."\textsuperscript{103} The City of Galveston officially closed the deal on September 16, 1970, and the Shriners departed Ashton Villa in 1971. The City Council proceeded as planned, turning the house over to the Beach Parks Board, which then leased it to GHF at a cost of $10 per year. In 1971 GHF embarked on a

\textsuperscript{101} GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, September 8, 1969, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
restoration project that would culminate in Ashton Villa’s July 25, 1974, Grand Opening.\(^{104}\)

Ashton Villa had been saved from destruction, but the enormous effort required to achieve success resulted in strained relationships. According to island rumor, despite the “philanthropist heart” of the El Mina Shrine, longtime Shriners continue to this day to be angry with GHF for what they interpreted as meddling in the Shrine’s business. Regardless, the struggle to save Ashton Villa is the first true example of the GHF successfully lobbying the Galveston City Council to take action to prevent the destruction of a historic structure. The positive connections made between GHF, County Judge Ray Holbrook, and the Galveston city government while saving Ashton Villa were strengthened by GHF’s larger preservation mission and the development of the Historical Districts Plan that took place concurrently. Through these connections and the increasing sensitivity of the city towards preservation, GHF was able to set the stage for the large-scale Strand renovation that defined the organization in the mid-1970s and early 1980s.

John Garner and his wife, Rochelle, officially began work on the Historic District Plan on June 9, 1969, in office space donated by the Kempner family in the Texas Building. Consulting architect Don Meyer of Keyes, Lethbridge, & Condon Architects in Washington, D.C., joined the Garners in July. Garner and Meyer spent the first few weeks organizing their project and then embarked on developing a preliminary report due to the City Planning Commission at the end of August. A more comprehensive study and plan would follow in mid-October. The first step for Garner and Meyer was defining the specific areas in Galveston that contained “significant architectural examples of their

respective styles and periods in sufficient numbers to express a continuity of historical
formation." Assisted by Rochelle, the pair walked much of the island to gain a sense
of what areas could form a unified historic district. By the July 24 meeting of GHF’s
Board of Directors, Meyer reported that Garner had “prepared maps of potential
historical districts showing exact boundaries and building configurations, and they have
made a preliminary survey of all areas of historic architectural and cultural importance in
the City of Galveston.”

A week later, Meyer and Garner met with city officials and civic leaders to
present their preliminary report, which suggested the creation of two historical districts:
the residential East End and The Strand area of the central business district. Each
district’s specific boundaries would be determined in future reports. The men stressed
the positive aspects of a historic district, stating, “Studies of operative districts have
shown that property values are stabilized, deterioration is reversed and economic
assistance for improving properties becomes more readily available. . . . [H]istoric
districts can be dynamic economic assets to a city.” Further, Meyer and Garner
highlighted the basic aspects of a historic district program. In a district, owners could
“retain their homes, buy and sell as they see fit, improve their property, or construct new
structures on vacant land, provided it is done in harmony with the traditional character,
scale and environment of the districts.” A panel composed of district property owners
would maintain the “architectural integrity” of their historical district. GHF needed to
sell the plan not only to the city government but also to the home and business owners,

105 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, July 24, 1969, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
106 Ibid.
107 Donald B. Myer & John C. Garner Jr., “Current Objectives of the Galveston Historical Foundation
Preservation Program,” July 31, 1969, Galveston Historical Foundation Subject File, GTHC.
108 Ibid.
who would help decide if the historical district plan would be implemented.\textsuperscript{109} Meyer and Garner presented their initial plan to the Galveston Planning Commission and the City Council’s Historic Study Committee in mid-August and a final, more detailed plan in late October.\textsuperscript{110}

Although great progress toward establishing the districts had been made with the completion of GHF’s study and the city’s establishment of a Historical Study Committee, the founding of Galveston’s first historical district was not imminent in early December 1969. The City Zoning Ordnance specified that a comprehensive plan must be first presented to the Planning Committee for approval. Once approved, it would go to the Zoning Commission, which would hold a public hearing specifically inviting comment from all property owners within the proposed district and those within 200 feet. Upon approval by the Zoning Commission, the matter would go before the City Council, which would hold a public hearing of its own. If passed by the City Council and a Historic District was established, a seven-person Historic District Board consisting of three property owners, a Galveston architect, one member of the Planning Committee, and two at-large members would be appointed. Throughout the process, a Historic District Study Committee was appointed with the express purpose “to investigate and analyze various efforts, findings and recommendations, both past and currently underway within

Galveston, concerning historic preservation,” and to come up with recommendations for the City Council.\textsuperscript{111}

James Garner presented GHF’s final proposal on historic districts to the Planning Commission on April 28, 1970. As introduced in August, Garner’s final recommendation included two historic districts, the residential East End and the commercial Strand area. The Strand district would be lie between 20\textsuperscript{th} and 26\textsuperscript{th} Streets, including the four blocks listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The East End district would include the area between Broadway and Mechanic and 14\textsuperscript{th} Street and 16\textsuperscript{th} Street.\textsuperscript{112} Garner believed these two areas demonstrated a variety of architectural styles and embodied a range of time periods in Galveston history. The plan also specified twenty “landmarks” that could be demolished only with special permission from the Historic District Board, the city’s Zoning Commission, or the county district court. Many of these “landmarks,” such as Ashton Villa, the Samuel May Williams House, the United States Custom House, and UTMB’s “Old Red,” actually existed outside the proposed districts, but the preservationists recognized they had the city’s attention and general support for historic preservation in that moment and wanted to press wide-ranging protectionist reforms where possible.\textsuperscript{113}

Garner also had presented his final plan at GHF’s Annual Meeting and Dinner on April 15, 1969. At the banquet, he again stressed the advantages of a residential historic district to homeowners, stating that a “historic zone attracts to it and around it property


owners who feel a responsibility to their neighbors and a desire to maintain their homes in good condition. And for qualified owners within the zones, local institutions have agreed to make a half-million dollars available in home improvement loans." Garner also reassured uneasy homeowners by stating, "This type of historic preservation, in which normal maintenance is not subject to regulation or review, is the most democratic and fair method of enabling an older neighborhood to restore and maintain itself."

Once GHF and John Garner presented their historical district proposal, the city worked quickly. The Planning Commission approved a modified version of GHF's plan in June. Although Garner and Meyer, at the urging of the city, reduced the area of the proposed historic districts in September 1969, the City Planning Commission, acting on the recommendation of the Historical District Study Committee, increased the district to include twenty-nine blocks in a T-shaped zone. The new East End Historical District would include the blocks east of 19th Street to 12th Street between Ball and Broadway and those north of Broadway to Market between 16th and 14th Streets.

The City Council and the Zoning Commission held hearings in early October. Many of the property owners in the proposed Strand district opposed historical zoning. In 1970 the Strand consisted of once-handsome two- to four-story commercial buildings from the mid- to late-nineteenth century, most of which had been left either abandoned or neglected. Seedy hotels and bars were scattered throughout. But due to two projects begun in 1967-1968 — the Junior League's Centre on the Stand and their restoration of the Trueheart-Adriance Building (212 22nd Street) — preservationists had great hopes for

114 Angerstein, "Historic District Plans Presented"; Westerlage, "Isle Planners to Get Proposals for Historical Zones Tonight."
115 Angerstein, "Historic District Plans Presented."

Despite the defeat of the Strand Historical District in 1970, preservation efforts on the Strand by the Junior League of Galveston offered hope that at least some of the architectural treasures of the area could be saved. In March 1967 the Junior League brought together representatives from Galveston’s various organizations, including GHF, the Beach Parks Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Galveston Art League, to discuss the development of a cultural center for the island. League President Mrs. Joe Blackshear (also a member of GHF) remarked that all of Galveston’s groups had attempted to promote a cultural program for island, but the League believed more could be done by coordinating the city’s efforts. The League had many volunteers working in the community each week, and some of those hours could be spent developing this idea. Blackshear announced that the League would develop a plan for the various groups to discuss and vote upon in the near future. This was not a novel idea for the Junior League of Galveston. Leagues around the nation completed similar projects, and after completing a two-year study on the needs of the community, the women of the Galveston
League believed that by spearheading the establishment of a cultural center, they would make a major educational contribution to the island.\footnote{118 “Island Cultural Program is Discussed by Groups,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, March 8, 1967; Jim Holman, “Plans Told for Center on Strand,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, October 5, 1967.}

In early October, the Junior League announced their proposal for a “Centre on the Strand” and the plan to restore two more historic buildings, the First National Bank Building (2127 Strand) and the Trueheart-Adriance Building (212 22\textsuperscript{nd} Street). The Centre on the Strand would serve the county as a type of enrichment center where children could be exposed to the county’s history, culture, and industry. The League also envisioned the Centre as a place for art exhibits, performances, lectures, and other cultural events. It would be an independent non-profit organization directed by its own board of trustees. At the time of the announcement, the League had already secured two major grants from Galveston foundations for the purchase and restoration of the two historic properties: $50,000 from the Moody Foundation and $30,000 from the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund. The League committed itself to raising an additional $60,000 within a year of the appointment of the Centre’s board.\footnote{119 Holman, “Plans Told for Center on Strand.”} In December, the board had been selected and, by the end of January, the organization had received its charter from the state, had its bylaws adopted, and officers were elected. The Centre received a $15,000 grant from the Houston Endowment in March 1968 as its fundraising campaign continued. Finally, in February 1969, the trustees of the Centre for the Stand authorized the purchase of the First National Bank Building, and, in May, the building became the
official property of the Centre on The Strand. Later that year, the Junior League secured
the purchase of the Trueheart-Adriance Building independent of the Centre.\textsuperscript{120}

The Centre opened as “Galveston’s new cultural enrichment center and exhibit
museum” on October 10, 1971.\textsuperscript{121} The first floor had been converted into a gallery space
with the first special exhibit featuring the original photographs from \textit{The Galveston That
Was}. The second floor housed offices for the three permanent employees, as well as
meeting rooms for use by area organizations.\textsuperscript{122} By April 3, 1972, the executive director
of the Centre estimated that more than 4,200 people had visited since the grand opening.
In 1972 the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council, a group organized in 1970 to
“[sponsor] and [encourage] cultural and artistic activities in the Galveston area,” started
an art academy on the second floor.\textsuperscript{123} The Arts Council, led by its innovative executive
director, Emily Whiteside, eventually took over operation of the Centre on the Strand,
and in 1975, the Centre on the Strand’s Board of Trustees transferred ownership of the
building, with the codicil that ownership would revert to the Junior League of Galveston
in the event that it was no longer used for cultural or educational purposes.\textsuperscript{124}

The Junior League of Galveston finished its renovation of the Trueheart-Adriance
Building in the summer of 1970. The three-story building, originally designed by
Nicholas J. Clayton and constructed in 1882, had served as the real estate office of H.M.

\textsuperscript{120} “First Meet by Centre Trustees Set,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, January 1, 1968; “Dr. Wilson Heads Board
For Centre,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, January 18, 1968; “Centre on Strand Received $15,000,” \textit{Galveston
February 27, 1969; Jim Holman, “Centre Title Changes Hands,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, May 1, 1969;
\textsuperscript{121} “Galveston Cultural Center,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, February 20, 1972.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.; “4200 Visit Isle Centre,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, April 3, 1972; Beasley and Fox 23.
\textsuperscript{123} Helen Smith, “Group Formed to Sponsor, Encourage Area Cultural, Artistic Activities,” \textit{Galveston Daily
\textsuperscript{124} “Arts Center Notes 5th Year,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, November 15, 1977; “Villa Tours a League
History of the Junior League of Galveston Country,”
Trueheart & Company and from 1898 through 1940 as the law offices of James B. and Charles J. Stubbs. The League took care to restore the structure so that it would have proper late-nineteenth century décor with special light fixtures, wallpaper, and hardware. First floor renovations allowed the space to be leased to a retailer, while the upstairs could be used as the organization’s offices. The group selected Evans-Monical, a trendy Houston “contemporary shop for furniture, accessories, and gifts,” as the first occupant of the first floor retail space. The League intended their building, their tenant, and the future Centre on The Strand to inspire other “imaginative and innovative businesses” to The Strand and hoped that “it would bring new life to the downtown community, give rebirth to the famous Strand area, and advance tourism to still another part of the island.” Although it took many years to become a successful tourist attraction and business district, the Junior League’s early work inspired exactly what they intended.

The Galveston Historical Foundation took notice of what the Junior League achieved with the Trueheart-Adriance Building and with the Centre on The Strand. At the April 14, 1969, Board of Directors meeting, GHF officers recognized the Junior League’s successes. It was even suggested that “The Foundation could do much of the same” and “try to purchase one of Galveston’s older buildings for a permanent office.” In the spring of 1969 the 294-member, all-volunteer GHF had its hands full. John Garner and Don Meyer were scheduled to arrive in June to complete the historical district plan. Negotiations concerning the fate of Ashton Villa were ongoing with the El Mina Shrine. Volunteers were preparing to open the Samuel May Williams for the summer tourist

126 “Trueheart-Adriance Building Renovation Marks JL’s Success.”
127 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, April 14, 1969, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
trade. GHF was also considering leasing the historic St. Joseph’s Church from the Catholic diocese for $1 a year and restoring it for use as a tourist stop. The Foundation and the scope of its activities had grown significantly over the course of the 1960s, but the timing was not yet right for GHF’s entrance into Strand renovation.128

In April 1969 when the board briefly discussed purchasing property on the Strand, the group actually already owned one: the western section of the Hendley Building (2014-2016 Strand). The commission agent firm of William Hendley & Company constructed the four separate sections of the Hendley Building (also known as Hendley Row) between 1855 and 1859. The structure suffered damage during the Civil War’s Battle of Galveston and was used by Confederates as a lookout during the Union blockade. During the summer of 1968, the owners of the western section began demolition. GHF members John and Sally Wallace all but literally stood in front of the wrecking ball to save one of the city’s most significant commercial buildings. They purchased the western half of the building (2010-2016 Strand) almost immediately, but not before workers removed some windows, part of the roof, and a section of the western wall. The Wallaces never intended to keep ownership of the entire structure. While still in negotiations to purchase the building, they offered the westernmost section (2014-2016 Strand) to GHF as a gift. The Board conducted an immediate telephone poll of its members to determine if the Foundation should accept the gift and formally accepted ownership at their August 12, 1968, meeting. The Foundation stabilized its section to

128 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, April 14, 1969; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, May 7, 1969, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
protect it from further deterioration, but GHF largely left the building vacant until the late 1970s.129

In the first years of the 1970s, GHF was poised for action. It had gradually transformed itself from a group dedicated to saving a single historic house into one working on multiple preservation projects throughout the city. The group had sponsored a major architectural survey of the island and worked to transform the dream of historic districts and protective zoning regulations for Galveston into reality. It learned to work with the city and the county to protect the city's historic heritage from destruction. Locals, newcomers, and the city government were starting to recognize the importance of preservation for the island and what it could do for Galveston's future.

Although by the early 1970s GHF had become a major force on the island, it perhaps had overextended itself. The group was involved in too many projects requiring too much work for its limited volunteer base. If the Foundation wanted to continue to expand and actively promote and perform preservation, it needed to somehow change its organizational structure. In 1973, with grants from the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund and the Moody Foundation, GHF hired its first full-time executive director: Peter Brink. Brink's hiring marked the start of a new institutional path that would ultimately make GHF one of the largest and most successful local historic preservation organizations in the nation, but the preservation work done in Galveston during the 1960s had laid the foundation for the revolutionary projects begun after Brink's arrival.

Chapter 4  
A New Beginning for GHF

Washington, D.C., attorney Peter Brink arrived on the island in early March 1973 to work with the Galveston Historical Foundation under a three-month contract. A month earlier, the Moody Foundation and the Eliza and Harris Kempner Fund had agreed to underwrite a revolving fund for historic preservation of commercial buildings, the first revolving fund of this type in the nation. The revolving fund would allow GHF to purchase dilapidated properties on the Strand, save them from further destruction, and sell them to buyers dedicated to rehabilitation and reuse. Although the Moody Foundation and the Kempner Fund felt strongly that GHF was the right Galveston cultural group to oversee the preservation project, they recognized that GHF’s all-volunteer structure might not be suitable to properly manage the fund. The Moody Foundation, which paid for Brink’s initial contract, charged the preservation attorney with reorganizing GHF into a non-profit that functioned with a professional executive director. GHF also had to evolve from a group focused on somewhat isolated projects such as the Samuel May Williams House and Ashton Villa, into one dedicated to a city-wide historic preservation program that would secure Galveston’s cultural and economic future. Brink stayed in Galveston longer than the initial three months — sixteen years to be exact — but the many projects begun by GHF in the first two years of Brink’s professional leadership dominated the island’s cultural and physical rehabilitation well into the 1980s.

In 1973 a small, unofficial group worked behind the scenes as a major force in the hiring of Brink, the development of the revolving fund for the Strand, and the
transformation of GHF. The five-person group eventually nicknamed themselves “the Junta” and consisted of longtime GHF supporter and community leader Sally Wallace; Kempner family member and banker Edward “Tim” Thompson, Jr.; grant coordinator and program administrator for the Moody Foundation Ed Protz; Harris Kempner Trust office manager and Kempner Fund trustee Arthur Alpert; and the executive director of the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council (GCCAC), Emily Whiteside. Members of the group first gathered and chatted at cocktail parties and community events, but eventually all five gathered for lunch or coffee to discuss the state of the city and how Galveston could improve culturally and economically. Protz later described the group as a “local think tank” that would brainstorm about how to solve various community crises and overcome obstacles to Galveston’s progress.¹

Emily Whiteside came to Galveston for the first time in June of 1971 as a consultant to study the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council and to make recommendations for future GCCAC programs and funding sources. GCCAC had been established in September 1970 as a group to unite organizations, businesses, and individuals for the promotion of cultural and artistic pursuits. Almost a year after its establishment, the Council worked to help coordinate the activities of and funding for its

¹ Edward L. Protz, interview by Robert Jones, December 10, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, Galveston and Texas History Center, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas (GTHC); Sally Wallace, interview by Mary Margaret Love, October 1, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC; Edward “Tim” R. Thompson, Jr., interview by Mary Margaret Love, November 20, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC; Peter Brink, interview by Mary Margaret Love, September 12, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC; Peter Brink, interview by Robert Jones, December 19, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC; Arthur Alpert, interview with Robert Jones, October 24, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC. Patti Steph participated in similar discussions with Alpert, Wallace, Protz, and Thompson prior to her untimely death in August 1971. It is interesting to wonder how the history of preservation in Galveston would be different if she had not died. In 1980, Steph’s friend and partner in preservation, Sally Wallace hypothesized that things would have moved much faster and perhaps the group might have accomplished much more.
thirteen member organizations.\textsuperscript{2} In March 1971 Ed Protz met with Tim Thompson about the GCCAC and how the Council could review requests for funds by member organizations and present them “with Council approval” to the Moody Foundation for funding. Thompson and Council president Edward Fox recognized that GCCAC found it difficult to judge funding requests because it did not have the proper knowledge to make an informed decision. Also, without a trained staff to follow-up with grantees and grantors, the Council could not properly maintain an active grant program. Thompson believed that with support from the Moody Foundation, the GCCAC could hire a trained administrator and solve its institutional problem. Protz did not agree. He envisioned a separate “non-profit cultural arts foundation in Galveston whose trustees would be composed of prominent citizens not necessarily connected with (in any case, not delegates representing) the cultural arts organization in the community.”\textsuperscript{3} This organization would have a paid staff, and cultural groups would be able to apply for funds. Protz did not believe that the GCCAC would be able to do this effectively, and at the time, Tim Thompson could not persuade him that the Council would be capable of adapting. Protz, however, knew that the Moody Foundation needed a better way to handle the multitude of funding requests from Galveston’s cultural organizations.\textsuperscript{4}

Ed Protz had heard of Emily Whiteside through her work as associate director of the Texas Arts and Humanities Commission and agreed with her philosophy “that community arts ought to be for everybody and that everybody ought to have an

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{3} Tim Thompson to Ed Protz, March 26, 1971, Box 1, GCCAC Records.
\bibitem{4} Ibid.; \textit{Learning from Galveston}, 61-63.
\end{thebibliography}
opportunity to participate in the arts."\(^5\) Whiteside graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in American Studies and completed graduate work there as well.\(^6\) Protz arranged for her to come to Galveston to present her vision of arts in Texas and community arts organizations to the GCCAC. After Whiteside presented at a meeting in mid-June 1971, Council leaders agreed that their organization should conduct an appraisal of its activities and goals. The Moody Foundation agreed to provide $2,500 for a thirty-day study by Whiteside "to develop long-range goals and plans for the organization and implementation of a comprehensive cultural arts program."\(^7\) Whiteside interviewed delegates from the member organizations, including GHF, and other major institutions in Galveston County, such as the Galveston Independent School District, the Chamber of Commerce, and the *Galveston Daily News*. She held a public forum on August 11, 1971, where she presented her still-developing ideas and attempted to judge the support for county-wide cultural events. She also brought in Clark Mitze, director of the state and community divisions of the National Endowment for the Arts, to speak at the public forum.\(^8\)

At the onset of her work in Galveston, Whiteside remarked on the goals of the study and stated to the *Galveston Daily News*, "Hopefully, I will be able to make suggestions toward a real and effective cultural council to improve the quality of life for

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\(^5\) Protz, interview; *Learning from Galveston*, 61-63.


all citizens of the Galveston County community.”9 She submitted her final report on August 23, 1971, and the cover sheet read simply, in all capital letters, “After all is said, there is always Monday morning. The question is . . . What will we do with it?”10 Studies allow organizations to realize what they do well, what they could improve upon, and how they can be successful in the future, but for a study to be a worthwhile investment, the institution must use the results to take action. The Galveston County Cultural Arts Council was so pleased with Whiteside herself and her recommendations that they hired her as its first full-time executive director.

Whiteside proposed three overarching goals or focus areas for the Cultural Arts Council: “Improvement of the County’s arts and humanities organizations and institutions,” “The Arts and Humanities in Education,” and “Galveston County’s cultural contribution to the American Revolution Bicentennial Anniversary of 1976.”11 She envisioned a community cultural arts council that would help Galveston’s organizations bring professional artists to the island and enrich the lives of both children and adults through cultural and artistic awareness. She also recognized the importance of the upcoming American Revolution Bicentennial in 1976. This national anniversary event would bring attention to American history, and various government entities, influenced by the enhanced spirit of patriotism and historical heritage, planned to allocate funds to help promote local cultural and historical projects.12 Whiteside was an ally of Ed Protz, and her vision for the GCCAC and the development of cultural and artistic events meshed

9 Bordelon, “County’s Cultural Needs and Potential Role of Arts Council Under Study.”
10 Whiteside, “Report on Galveston County Visitation.”
11 Ibid.
with his, allowing her to work closely with the Moody Foundation to fund their mutual goals for Galveston.

Whiteside went to work immediately. Protz later commented about Whiteside and her work:

She came down and she was a steam winder. She turned the island upside down and did it until the very day she left. She was a dynamo of energy and was, again, a visionary, far ahead of everybody else in seeing the potential of the island in terms of what it could do, and what it could be in the arts.\(^\text{13}\)

In September, Whiteside applied for and received a grant from the Moody Foundation “to support the professional administration of the programs and projects of a fully-representative Galveston County Cultural Arts Council.”\(^\text{14}\) She also received operational funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Texas Arts and Humanities Commission that first year.\(^\text{15}\)

Although Whiteside spent most of her time on the coordination and sponsorship of artistic, musical, and dramatic programs, early on she recognized the importance of the Strand development to Galveston’s cultural and economic future. She understood the connection between historic preservation and the arts. She saw the beauty in Galveston’s neglected architectural treasures and considered them cultural resources that the GCCAC could promote. A beautiful historic area would help create the aesthetic environment necessary to attract and retain professional artists that would in turn attract cultural tourists. Galveston was on the right track with the work of the Junior League, the Centre on the Strand, and various other cultural groups, but it needed to transform from an all-

\(^{13}\) Protz, interview. Whiteside left Galveston in 1980.
\(^{14}\) GCCAC Grant Proposal to the Moody Foundation, September 24, 1971, Box 1, GCCAC Records.
volunteer movement into one sponsored by local citizens but led by professionals. Whiteside took on this challenge willingly and enthusiastically.

The Council physically entered into the Strand revitalization in the summer of 1972 when it established the Arts Center on The Strand on the upper floors of the restored First National Bank Building (the Centre on the Strand).\textsuperscript{16} The success of the Arts Center prompted Whiteside and the Council to actively move forward toward initiating a coordinated effort to renovate and revitalize the five-block Strand district.\textsuperscript{17} Whiteside brought Ronald Lee Fleming, executive director of Vision, Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Galveston in late November/early December 1972.\textsuperscript{18} In 1972 Fleming and Vision, Inc., were pioneers in the local preservation movement and had developed several of the early "Main Street" projects. Guided by Sally Wallace, Fleming and his associate, Benjamin Mason, spent six days in Galveston meeting with community and city leaders. The men presented their conclusions in a summary presentation and in a detailed report sent to Whiteside on December 14. After touring Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston for comparison, Fleming and Mason realized something extraordinary about Galveston. They wrote:

Galveston, seemingly alone among major cities in Texas, retains its unique character and flavor. Galveston alone evokes a sense of place. Only Galveston retains an identity in a state that seems hell-bent on making every place look exactly like every other place.

We are convinced the total character of Galveston — the whole city — is unique in, and important to, Texas. We

\textsuperscript{16} "Arts Center Notes 5th Year," \emph{Galveston Daily News}, November 15, 1977.
\textsuperscript{17} Emily M. Whiteside, "The New Urbanist or Will Walgreens Make it Back?" testimony before the United States House of Representatives, Subcommittee on the City, Committee on Banking, Finance & Urban Affairs, August 4, 1977, Box 12, Galveston Historical Foundation Administrative Records MS#87-0019 (hereafter cited as GHF Admin Records), GTHC.
\textsuperscript{18} "Consultants Meet with City Officials," \emph{Galveston Daily News}, November 29, 1972.
believe the preservation, enhancement, and interpretation of
the city’s essential quality demands sensitive, systematic,
comprehensive planning, development, and management.
There is an obligation both to the residents and to visitors
to do the job properly. We feel a realistic preservation and
promotion program can become a unifying force in the
community, rallying traditionally disparate political,
economic and social forces toward a common goal.19

Vision, Inc., articulated what those who had been involved in the movement to preserve
Galveston thus far had been saying for years. Fleming and Mason pointed out the
potential of the island, identified what they saw as its problems, and made
recommendations for the future. Foremost, Galveston had a public relations problem —
Galvestonians themselves viewed it as “a place of high cost, low opportunity and
moribund economy,” and outsiders saw it as “a cheap ‘day-tripper’ beach resort where
gambling once flourished.”20 An “attitudinal malaise” within the city’s leadership and a
focus on planning and studies (not action) only intensified the effects of Galveston’s very
real problems. The planners recommended that an organization specifically dedicated to
the daily administration of an active preservation effort in the historical districts of
Galveston be formed and that organization be headed by a paid, professional executive
director. This group would “[have] as its prime objective the development, protection,
enhancement and interpretation of all the historic properties and areas of Galveston.”21

Fleming and Mason expanded their vision for the yet-to-be established preservation
organization by recommending it utilize established preservation tools such as “revolving
funds, leasebacks, easements, full fee ownerships, historic districts, etc” and also
advocated that the preservation of Galveston not be limited to the Strand area but also

19 Ronald Lee Fleming and Benjamin Mason to Emily Whiteside, December 14, 1972, Box 1, GCCAC
Records.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
include the East End Historic District and various specific sites throughout the city.\textsuperscript{22} They advised that, although the bulk of the funding must come from the city and its community resources, "outside financial and technical support" such as grants from HUD, the National Park Service, and business corporations should be utilized. A "visual education program" would also be necessary "to help stimulate local leaders" and convince them of the benefits of an enthusiastic preservation effort. Although the GHF-sponsored HABS project accomplished much, the men believed additional examination of the historic buildings and districts in Galveston was needed so that it would be available to those pursuing the physical preservation of the structures.\textsuperscript{23} Whiteside and the Council took these recommendations seriously. In the coming year, the GCCAC and the various supporters of the Strand project would implement all of the recommendations, with GHF reorganizing into a professional non-profit, much like the GCCAC had done in 1971.

Whiteside also contacted San Antonio architect O'Neil Ford about the potential for a large-scale renovation of the Strand area. Ford told her about the Architecture and Environmental Arts Division of the National Endowment for the Arts, and, on January 6, 1973, the GCCAC announced approval of a matching grant of $8,000 from that NEA division. This grant brought in other nationally known preservation authorities, including Leopold “Lee” Adler of Historic Savannah and Arthur Ziegler of Pittsburg History and Landmarks Foundation, to study the Strand and make recommendations on the feasibility of restoration and adaptive reuse. The study encouraged many of the same recommendations made by Vision, Inc., specifically the hiring of a paid professional to

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
direct preservation efforts and the establishment of a revolving fund to aid preservation of the Strand district.\(^24\)

The feasibility study furthered Whiteside’s initial goals for the GCCAC in that she envisioned a restoration of the Strand as one of the major features of Galveston’s American Revolution Bicentennial Celebration program. Whiteside and preservation supporters (including those at the NEA who funded the study) recognized the potential of the Bicentennial to motivate, publicize, and even fund preservation projects over the ensuing four to five years. They realized that Bicentennial projects were intended not only to promote our nation’s heritage and history but also to put a spotlight on the importance of Galveston’s architecture and the place of the island’s history within the larger American narrative.

The movement to celebrate the bicentennial of the American Revolution began in the early 1960s, and debate on how to celebrate 200 years of United States history ensured. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the act establishing the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (ARBC) on July 4, 1966. The federal government charged the ARBC with planning “an overall program commemorating the Bicentennial of the American Revolution and of the nation’s birth”\(^{25}\) Plans moved slowly. Johnson did not appoint the first of the commission members until January 1967, and it took until


the summer of 1968 for the commission to receive federal appropriations for a professional staff and operating funds. On July 4, 1970, the ARBC presented its first report to the president, a report that set the tone for the large scale celebration and the "Festival of Freedom." Although the question of whether to hold a large central exposition remained, the initial report "proposed a cooperative relationship with local, state and private Bicentennial commissions, under which the ARBC would provide assistance and guidance to the extent possible" and hoped that local communities in all of the fifty states would host events that "[provide] opportunity for direct citizen participation in examining the heritage and values of this nation." In 1971 the ARBC opened four regional offices to help state and local entities to plan celebrations (ten offices would be open by 1973). The commission continued discussions on the central exposition and narrowed the conversation to an international event for 1976 held in Philadelphia. However, with questions of cost, timing, and local support lingering, the ARBC voted unanimously in May 1972 to abandon the idea. Over the spring and summer of 1972 a public debate raged over what many saw as "the ARBC's apparent inability to make final decisions" on programs, and many accused the commission of intense commercialism. The ARBC survived the public fight, but in November 1972 the members decided to refrain from taking an "active operational role" and instead concentrated on planning, coordination, and marketing. The commission's organizational structure contributed to its delayed decision making and hindered the

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group from taking action. In January 1974 legislation replaced the ARBC with the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA). The independent federal agency was charged with the task “to coordinate, facilitate and aid in scheduling Bicentennial events, activities and projects of local, state, and regional, national and international significance.” It was also responsible for assisting public and private organizations direct their resources in the organization and realize their Bicentennial goals. Specifically, the ARBA established two objectives:

(1) that the federal government and the states should cooperate in a common effort and that each individual should have a right to participate; and (2) that federal funding in direct support of citizen programs initiated by local communities and groups should be divided as evenly as possible on a matching basis through Bicentennial organizations chartered in each of the states.

The ARBA inherited a network of regional, state, and local Bicentennial committees that sought to bring a spirit of historical celebration and patriotism to every American. It helped promote the activities of these committees though the publication of newsletters, marketing events in the media, and by maintaining a computer database, the Bicentennial Information Network (BINET), of the thousands of Bicentennial activities offered around the nation. The national movement to celebrate the Bicentennial of the American Revolution truly sought to unify a country damaged by the Vietnam War, the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., social upheaval, and political scandal. The Bicentennial would be an opportunity for every

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American to come together to commemorate and reconnect with a positive national identity based in historical memory.\textsuperscript{33}

The Galveston City Council approved the creation of a Bicentennial Committee, officially headed by Mayor M. L. Ross, on December 7, 1972, and the island entered into the movement. The Council named Mary Moody Northen honorary chairman.\textsuperscript{34} Less than two weeks later, Whiteside drafted goals for Galveston’s Bicentennial celebration. These goals established “Galveston — Historic Gulf Gateway to the West — Explorer of Sea and Space” as the central theme for Galveston County’s Bicentennial and clarified the island’s particular focus on the three national themes established by the ARBC: (1) Heritage “Redevelopment of Galveston Island to reflect its unique cultural, architectural, geographic and economic heritage”; (2) Festival, U.S.A. “Development of State, National and International tourism”; (3) and Horizons ’76 “Exploration of sea and space as vital to man’s existence.”\textsuperscript{35} Ross named Whiteside executive committee chair, and, assisted by County Judge Ray Holbrook, he appointed the members of three subcommittees: Heritage, Festival U.S.A., and Horizons. Former GHF president Bob Nesbitt chaired the Heritage Committee, whose members included GHF supporters Sally Wallace, Arthur Alpert, John Hyatt, Tom Price, and Reita Fugger. GHF also had a presence in the other two committees, with Anne Ammons Bindley and Tim Thompson on the Festival U.S.A. Committee and Ed Protz on the Horizons committee. All five members of the Junta

\textsuperscript{33} ARBA, \textit{The Bicentennial of the United States of America, Volume I}, 2-9.


\textsuperscript{35} Galveston County Cultural Arts Council, “Call for Achievement: Bicentennial Goals of Galveston County,” December 18, 1972, Bicentennial Committee Subject File, GTHC.
worked on the Bicentennial Committee and recognized it as a positive means for economic and cultural development on the island.\(^{36}\)

The Junta members (Whiteside, Wallace, Thompson, Protz, and Alpert) agreed with many of the conclusions drawn by the preservation consultants brought to Galveston by the GCCAC. The Moody Foundation and the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund believed in the Strand project and offered the money to establish the revolving fund. The question remained, however, who would manage it. Whiteside and the Cultural Arts Council could not effectively manage the project and continue to successfully promote the Bicentennial and the development of Galveston's artistic and cultural renaissance.\(^{37}\)

Ronald Lee Fleming and Benjamin Mason recommended the establishment of an independent preservation organization for the island in their consultation report, but Galveston already had one — GHF.\(^{38}\) The large-scale restoration of the Strand had publicly been Whiteside and the GCCAC's endeavor; and although GHF supporters might have been involved through their work with the Arts Council, and the preservation consultants brought in by Whiteside did speak with GHF leaders, the Foundation was not officially involved. GHF struggled with the restoration of Ashton Villa, the maintenance of the Samuel May Williams House, St. Joseph's Church, and their other various projects around town, but it possessed a corps of volunteers, a name recognized on the island and in national preservation circles, and, perhaps most importantly, incorporation. A legal entity would be necessary to operate a revolving fund and own the property and façade

\(^{36}\) "Background on the Bicentennial," "Galveston: Report of the Community of Galveston, Texas on the Pilot Project conducted under Contract with the Texas Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration," July 1974, Bicentennial Committee Subject File, GTHC; Galveston County Bicentennial Committee Member List, Box 1, GCCAC Records.

\(^{37}\) Protz, interview; Alpert, interview; Thompson, interview; Wallace, interview; Brink, interview, September 12, 1980; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; Peter Brink, interview with the author, December 2006.

\(^{38}\) Fleming and Mason to Whiteside, December 14, 1972.
easements it purchased. GHF was already established in a way that would provide the necessary managerial flexibility. Members of the Junta supported GHF with their time, with the funds they represented and operated, and through the other organizations they worked with. In addition, Galveston was a small city, meaning it had a limited number of volunteer leaders to serve many competing cultural groups. Another organization dedicated to historic preservation would not have been in the best interest of the community.

Just as Tim Thompson and Ed Protz believed the fledgling Cultural Arts Council needed professional leadership to best help the cultural arts community in 1971, in the spring of 1973 the Junta knew that professional leadership was needed for GHF to manage the Strand renovation. GHF's operations and leadership structure would need to be updated so that it could function under the guidance of an executive director who would focus most of his energy toward the Strand redevelopment.39 When approached about the revolving fund and the hiring of an executive director, GHF board members welcomed these changes. They understood that the methods necessary for a successful and active preservation movement in Galveston required change. Board members also recognized, as former GHF president Inez Lasell stated:

Volunteers can only do so much. You need a unified head of effort. Someone who knows what's going on everywhere at all times and you just cannot expect a volunteer to do this. Now, Mrs. Brindley did it. Had she been at the same age in 1973, she might very well have been the person to do this. . . . There was no one like that around at that point and time.40

39 Wallace, interview; Thompson, interview; Protz, interview; Alpert, interview.
40 Inez Lassell, interview with Robert Jones, January 14, 1981, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC. Interestingly, in the spring of 1973, Anne Ammons Brindley was at the start of her one year term as president of the Texas State Historical Association. Brindley was the first Galvestonian and
Board member Tim Thompson welcomed the stability of an executive director for the Foundation and believed that this change would help pull GHF out financial difficulties imposed by the restoration of Ashton Villa and the maintenance of the Williams House. He also believed that the Strand project would expand the Foundation’s membership, which would help support GHF’s non-Strand projects.41

Ads for the interim directorship/consultancy were placed in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the Houston newspapers.42 Peter Brink, then an attorney for the Washington, D.C., firm of Boasberg, Hewes, Klores, and Kass, decided he was interested in the position and conducted a telephone interview with Tim Thompson in early 1973. Brink had attended Dartmouth College and graduated from Harvard Law School. He passed the bar in New York and participated in the Africa-Asia Program of Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs between 1966 and early 1969. He then practiced administrative law for two years and served as treasurer and director of operations for the 1972 Presidential campaign of Maine Senator Edmund S. Muskie. Brink, unhappy with the traditional practice of law, had joined his present firm because of the diversity of its projects. Mary Anne Beinecke, the wife of Walker Beinecke, Jr., who spent millions restoring Nantucket Island in the late 1950s and 1960s, became a new client of Boasberg, Hewes, Klores, and Kass shortly after Brink’s arrival at the firm, and she was interested in the development of a restoration project herself in North Adams, Massachusetts. Brink served as interim director for Beinecke’s project and completed the legal and administrative work to purchase and restore a historic second woman to serve as president. In the TSHA’s 110 year history there have only been six female presidents.

41 Thompson, interview.
42 Brink, interview, September 12, 1980.
mill complex that was intended to operate as an arts center for the local community college. In addition to local funding for the $1 million project, Brink raised $60,000 in federal and state planning funds and received $400,000 from HUD for the acquisition and restoration of the complex. Brink had also worked on the South Street Seaport Museum restoration project in New York City. He knew how to successfully raise funds, had legal experience, and operated in national preservation circles — all characteristics the Junta desired.43

Tim Thompson sent Peter Brink written confirmation of GHF’s offer of a temporary interim director position on March 1, 1973, and Brink arrived in Galveston shortly thereafter.44 Officially Brink would work for GHF and be paid per work day with money provided by the Moody Foundation. In 1980 Brink described his hiring:

It was sort of a strange arrangement, because I dealt mostly with a little ad hoc committee: Sally Wallace, Emily Whiteside, Arthur Alpert, Ed Protz, and Tim Thompson. That was how I was hired. I was introduced to the board, and the Historical Foundation approved it. The decision was made at that time that the Strand projects should be a part of the Galveston Historical Foundation, and it was after that that I got involved in a lot of reorganizing and restructuring of the Historical Foundation.45

Under the terms of his contract and the terms of GHF’s receipt of revolving fund support from the Moody Foundation and Kempner Fund, Brink was to devise a workable budget for GHF, construct a strategy for the operation of the fund, define the job of executive director, interview and select a permanent executive director, and “broad[en] and

43 Brink, interview, December 2006; Brink, interview, September 12, 1980; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; “Peter Brink to Be Executive Director,” The Saccarappa: Newsletter of the Galveston Historical Foundation, July-August 1973, Archives of the Galveston Historical Foundation, Galveston, Texas (hereafter cited as GHF Archives).
44 Brink, interview, December 2006; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; Thompson, interview.
45 Brink, interview, September 12, 1980.
reorganize[e] the Historical Foundation to bring in more businessmen in the working of it and so on.”  

Although the Foundation had been involved in many influential and well-publicized projects and assisted the city government with historic district planning, in 1973, according to Thompson, GHF “wasn’t a city-wide organization and it didn’t have that city-wide concern.”  

GHF overcame much during the 1960s and early years of the 1970s, but in order to make the Strand and the revolving fund successful, Brink had to convince skeptical Galveston businessmen of the positive powers of preservation.

When Brink arrived in March 1973, significant challenges lay ahead of him. Fortunately, similar to Emily Whiteside’s arrival in 1971, Brink quickly jumped into action. Thompson described the work of Brink during the contract period:

He came down and almost immediately did things that I couldn’t believe that anybody would ever be able to do. . . . Peter was able by persuasion and by experience to bring such diverse people together and get the support of bankers, insurance men, to get the co-operation of the ‘junta’, . . . It was all extremely to Peter’s credit that he was able to size up the situation quickly, seize the initiative get all the diverse elements together and pull them into a block of people which became the nucleus of the new organization.

Brink’s status as a Galveston outsider and attorney worked to his advantage in promoting cooperation among the city’s various community leaders and validating the Strand project. Although development on the Strand had been encouraged for almost a decade by Galveston cultural and social groups, including the Junior League and GHF, and numerous studies on the value of Galveston’s architectural heritage had been completed and publicized, in 1973 the Strand was still considered by many to be unsafe. Protz went
so far as to state, “No decent person would ever be seen on the Strand with all those derelicts,” and, “Nobody would go down there at night, because they would be afraid they would be mugged or robbed or women would be raped.” Although some money for the project had been invested by foundations, if the Strand were to be successful, it had to be supported by Galveston’s business community. Artists and tourists might bring life to the Strand once the restoration was in full swing, but the island’s businesses and professionals would need to invest in the properties and take the financial risks up front. Brink had to convince them of the economic value of preservation and continue to win over supporters for this project. Fortunately, his personality appealed to business and medical professionals and community activists alike, and he was able to successfully convey his enthusiasm for preservation to many island critics.

Brink and the members of the Junta agreed that the Galveston Historical Foundation needed credibility and stability if the wider business community was to fully support the Strand’s revitalization. They appealed to the mayor of Galveston and UTMB physician M. Lamar Ross. A close friend of Ed Protz, Ross met regularly with Protz to discuss community issues, but historic preservation, the Strand Project, and GHF had thus far failed to interest him. Regardless, Brink and the Junta realized that Ross’s support of GHF and the Strand’s restoration would bring a legitimacy to the Foundation’s efforts that they alone could not. Ross worked as a family physician in Galveston for over thirty years before being asked to found the Department of Family Medicine at UTMB in 1969. He served on the city council between 1963 and 1969 and as mayor between 1971 and 1973. Ross was a highly respected Galvestonian with a large network

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49 Protz, interview.
50 Ibid., Brink, interview, September 12, 1980; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; Thompson, interview.
of supporters. Protz described him as “a man of great integrity, great strength, great respect” who “had a reputation of being fair and honest” and “was not quick to jump into things, but to evaluate them very carefully and to move very methodically.” 51 During his interim directorship, Brink was able to not only convince Ross of the economic and cultural benefits of the Strand restoration, but he also persuaded Ross to serve as president of the reorganized GHF. Ross’s public position as president would boost the Foundation’s image and standing in the community immensely. 52

The Galveston Historical Foundation made its official public announcement about the establishment of the Revolving Fund for the Strand on Thursday, April 26, 1973, at noon during a special event held jointly by the Foundation and the Galveston County Bicentennial Committee. Peter Brink and Emily Whiteside publicized the special occasion as “An Historic Event” in the Galveston Daily News and sent out over one thousand invitations to it and a special “Pure Galveston” celebration to be held on Sunday, April 29. 53 After a brief introductory speech by Mayor Ross, Mary Moody Northen formally announced the $200,000 grant to GHF for the establishment of the Revolving Fund. Brink followed Northen’s announcement and revealed that the Foundation had already utilized the fund to purchase six Strand buildings: the Mensing Brothers Building (2120-2128 Strand, built 1882), the Ben Blum Building (2301-2307 Strand, built 1872, also known as the T.J. League Building), the J.F. Smith and Brothers Building (2321-2323 Strand, built 1870), the James Fadden Building (2410-2412 Strand, built 1880), and the Ala Moona Building (2414-2416 Strand, built 1873). The Galveston Historical Foundation used the funds to purchase these buildings, which serve as excellent examples of Galveston’s unique architectural history.

52 Thompson, interview; Protz, interview; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980.
1898), the Bock Building (2104-2306 Strand, 1882), and the Tramonte Building (2426-2428 Strand, a former gas station of no architectural significance purchased because of its location).\(^{54}\) He explained that the structures would be sold to others who would be required by deed restrictions to restore the exterior façade to its original appearance.\(^{55}\)

Brink went on to describe the Strand project, stating:

It is the foundation's purpose not only to have the buildings on the Strand restored, but to bring them fully into the mainstream of Galveston-Houston area life. The Strand, once restored, can provide magnificent apartments and townhouses. Its 19th century architecture and its seafaring tradition provide a sense of place and a unique atmosphere for shops and restaurants. Existing businesses, such as wine importers and a ship's chandlery, add authenticity to the area.\(^{56}\)

Brink also revealed plans for the “Pure Galveston” celebration to be held three days later. This afternoon event would feature the presentation of a state historical medallion for the Trueheart-Adriance Building, art displays, and brief talks on tourism, historic preservation, and the upcoming Bicentennial. Most importantly, this “Pure Galveston” celebration kept the Strand development in the *Galveston Daily News* for several more days and provided a chance for Brink and Whiteside to promote their programs.\(^{57}\)

Five of the six buildings purchased by GHF actually changed ownership in March. On April 10, 1973, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that attorney Alton Todd, acting as a trustee for his law firm, Mills, Shirley, McMicken and Eckel, purchased the J.F. Smith and Brothers Building on March 5, the Blum Building on March 19, and the


\(^{55}\) Bordelon, “Strand Plans Told.”

\(^{56}\) Ibid.

Tramonte Building on March 22. The News also revealed that Charles Colby, who purchased the Magale Building (2313-2315 Strand) in the late 1960s, negotiated the sale of the James Fadden Building and the Mensing Brothers Building for Todd and his firm. Although the property owners told the News they believed the anonymous buyers were interested in preservation and the Bicentennial, Todd refused to reveal his client or their intentions. In 1980 Tim Thompson disclosed in an interview that the Junta secretly worked through “a blind third party” to purchase options on Strand properties prior to the official revolving fund announcement so that fair market value purchase prices could be negotiated. The Junta chose to operate secretly through a third party because it feared that owners of property on the Strand might hold out for above market sale prices if they knew of the revolving fund and the involvement of the Moody Foundation and the Kempner Fund.

Although by the end of April the revolving fund was technically in operation and GHF held title to six Strand properties, Brink’s work was far from complete. The Foundation needed to further develop a plan for the Strand and the selling of the historic structures and officially pass new bylaws organizing the new leadership structure. On May 24, 1973, Brink mailed notice of a GHF Membership Meeting to be held Monday, June 25, 1973, copies of proposed new bylaws, and a document detailing these recommendations. Officially, these recommendations came from the Board of Directors, but Brink guided the Board and drafted the bylaws himself. The recommendations

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59 Thompson, interview.
memo stressed the significance of the opportunity presented to GHF by the revolving fund and the employment of an executive director and emphasized that reorganization was necessary "so that the revolving fund can be operated with reasonable independence in accordance with commercial requirements and so the Executive Director can work effectively in the Foundation." It reassured members that GHF's existing projects at Ashton Villa, the Samuel May Williams House, and St. Joseph's Church would continue and even be strengthened by the invigorated Foundation. The stated purpose of GHF did not change and remained:

the preservation, restoration and maintenance of historic sites and landmarks located within the confines of Galveston County, Texas, and for research and the collection and preservation in Rosenberg Library of documents, printed matter and relics, concerning the history of Galveston and Galveston County and for diffusion of knowledge with respect thereto.

In addition, the new structure of the organization sought to retain all project leaders and former Trustees. GHF may have had a new focus, but Brink and the organization's leaders knew that it could not alienate the volunteers who created and nurtured the group over the past two decades.

The bylaws organized the Foundation into a three-tier structure guided by a Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and six Officers. The forty-to-sixty member Board of Directors would be elected by the members with each director holding a three-year term. The terms would be staggered so that only one-third of the board would change each year. The board held "the ultimate responsibility for the operation of the

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Foundation” and would meet at least three times a year to approve the general budget, guide the establishment and appointment of members to standing committees, and review the general operations of the Foundation. Brink and GHF leaders intended this Board of Directors as a way to draw influential Galvestonians to the Foundation so that GHF “[could] both represent more fully the many groups and interests supporting historic preservation in Galveston and become the focal point for sensitizing economic and political leaders to the problems and benefits of preservation.”

According to the bylaws, the Executive Committee would meet monthly to ensure the steady and proper progress of GHF projects and make decisions between meetings of the Board. It would consist of at most twenty-three voting members and one non-voting member (the Executive Director) — the six main Foundation officers (president, treasurer, vice-president landmarks, vice-president revolving fund, vice-president programs, and secretary [the executive director]), chairmen of the standing committees (Ashton Villa, Samuel May Williams House, Saint Joseph’s Church, Revolving Fund, Finance, Membership, Research and Education, Publicity, and Survey), and nine directors nominated by the president and approved by the Board of Directors. The day-to-day work of individual projects would be managed by the six officers and the chairmen of the standing committees. The bylaws also created a steering committee consisting of the officers and two representatives from the executive committee to handle any work delegated by the executive committee. The Executive Director of the Foundation would serve as secretary and would be an ex-officio, non-voting member of

the Board of Directors, the executive committee, and the steering committee. Although the executive director worked with and inspired the board, executive committee, and officers, he was employed by the Foundation, and final GHF decisions would be left to the leaders elected by the membership.66

The general GHF membership approved the bylaws and elected leaders at the June 25, 1973, meeting. Brink and the past leaders of GHF carefully selected the slate for new officer and Board elections. They realized the importance of this first reorganized Board of Directors and selected prominent names from around the island. The membership elected as president Dr. M. Lamar Ross, who had ended his term as mayor in May. Tim Thompson was selected as treasurer, Gene D. Wyatt of Moody National Bank as vice-president revolving fund, Dr. E. Burke Evans as vice-president landmarks, and Evangeline Whorton, wife of UTMB scientist Elbert Whorton, as vice-president programs. Past GHF President Inez Lasell was selected as alternate vice-president landmarks.67

GHF membership elected fifty-two persons to its Board of Directors and appointed nine of the directors — Byron Everts, Reiata Fugger, Mrs. Charels Hooks, Terry Miller, Andrew P. Monsour, Robert Nesbit, William R. Parkey, Joseph L. Schlankey, and Sally Wallace— to the executive committee. The names of those on the Board varied from longtime GHF volunteer leaders such as Anne Ammons Brindley, Katherine Vedder Pauls, W. Maury Darst, Maybelle Jordan, and Maureen Elizabeth “Kewpie” Gaido to the influential Galveston County Judge Roy Holbrook and newly

installed Galveston Mayor R. A. Apffel. The membership named Mary Moody Northen an honorary member of the board, and her nephew W. L. Moody IV, a trustee of the Moody Foundation, was elected to the board as well. Other community leaders included attorney and city council member E. Douglas McLeod; city council member, former Galveston School Board member, and pastor of the Shiloh African Methodist Episcopal Church Davis Harris; and the first female elected to any Galveston city office, former city council member and wife of banker Harris L. Kempner, Ruth Levy Kempner. Directors selected from the medical community included Dr. Truman G. Blocker, Jr., a longtime UTMB physician who served head of UTMB from 1964 to 1974, and Dr. Chester Burns. Theasel Henderson, the first African-American elected to serve on the Galveston School Board and the father of the first male African-American graduate of Rice University, was also elected a Director. Although the board was composed mainly of Galvestonians, the membership selected Houston residents Howard Barnstone and Stewart Morris, both avid preservationists with strong connections to the city. With Ross publicly speaking out about GHF as the president and this Board of Directors working on projects and supporting the Foundation throughout the community, the reorganized Galveston Historical Foundation stood strong and ready to take on the challenge of restoring the Strand and balancing its other projects.68

The work of interim executive director Peter Brink pleased GHF’s leadership and other members of the community at large. Part of Brink’s initial contract was to hire a permanent executive director for GHF. Foundation leaders offered the permanent job to Brink several times during his sixty-day contract, but Brink, who planned to be married

in August, felt that he needed to work as an attorney and stay in Washington, D.C. The final part of his job was to return to Washington, interview candidates for the executive director position, and make a recommendation to the GHF Executive Committee. At some point in early July he changed his mind. He explained in a letter to Ralph C. Poling, a candidate for the position, "As I have been explaining the greatest challenge and opportunity of the Galveston program to applicants during the past few weeks, I seem to have persuaded myself that Galveston is the frontline as far as preservation is concerned." On July 10, 1973, Brink finalized negotiations with his law firm for a one-year leave of absence and formally applied for the Foundation’s Executive Director position. Three days later, the Steering Committee met without Brink and decided unanimously to offer him a one-year contract paid for through the revolving fund. He accepted the offer, and shortly thereafter both the Executive Committee and Ed Protz, in his position of Grants Coordinator for the Moody Foundation, approved the contract.

Soon after signing the contract Brink drafted his first "Letter from the Executive Director" for the Foundation's newsletter, "The Saccarappa." He began, "This was to be a farewell letter, but things changed so completely last week that it is now a letter written with high hopes of our work together in the coming year." He continued with his hopes for the city:

While I regret the lateness of my decision to remain at the Historical Foundation, I have no doubts about the decision itself. Galveston stands with a handful of American cities which retain intact large areas of magnificent 19th century

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69 Thompson, interview; Protz, interview.
70 Peter Brink to Ralph C. Poling, July 30, 1973, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
71 "Peter Brink to be Executive Director," The Saccarappa, July-August 1973; Contract between Peter Brink and the Galveston Historical Foundation, July 13, 1973, Box 1, GHF Admin Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, July 16, 1973, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, July 20, 1973, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.
structures. While other cities struggle to preserve their heritage with scattered landmarks, Galveston can save whole blocks of great historical and architectural importance. While other cities have decimated their downtowns, Galveston . . . though scarred . . . can have a gracious, beautiful downtown. Galveston, instead of becoming standardized, homogenized and indistinguishable from thousands of cities across the country, can retain and enhance a uniqueness and a beauty distinctly Galveston.  

Brink saw the beauty of the Island City, and he enthusiastically looked forward to the challenges that its restoration presented. After a short discussion of the revolving fund and progress on the Strand, he closed by stating, “The coming year will be exciting. I think the key to it is that we think big and work diligently and effectively to make our goals into realities. For my part, I am honored to be a part of such a fine organization with such a worthy challenge before it.”

Peter Brink spent most of the month of August getting married and enjoying his honeymoon, but he returned to Galveston in early September 1973 eager to establish the Galveston Historical Foundation as a leader in the national preservation movement. In an August 9, 1973, letter to Dr. William Murtagh of the National Trust, Brink revealed a sense of urgency and importance concerning his work in Galveston. He wrote “I believe Galveston is at a crucial period and will either be restored and revitalized in the coming few years or will be torn down building by building and block by block.” In October he told the Galveston Daily News that the preservation of Galveston “is probably one of the most exciting restoration projects going on in the country.” Brink looked to Lee Adler’s work with Savannah with the residential revolving fund and adaptive reuse as a

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73 Ibid.
74 Peter Brink to William Murtagh, August 9, 1973, Box 1, GHF Admin Records.
model for what could be done on the island.\textsuperscript{76} Although he would dedicate the overwhelming majority of his time to the Strand project, Brink envisioned the commercial restoration not simply as an isolated project to revitalize five blocks of a once vibrant district but as one part of the revitalization of the whole city. He recognized how Ashton Villa, the Williams House, St. Joseph’s Church, and historic residential neighborhoods would fit together with the renovated Strand to create an island city dedicated to the preservation of the past, the promotion of history and culture, and the encouragement of a new kind of tourism. Brink also told the \textit{News}, “The historical foundation’s Strand project is important enough to Galveston’s future that it involves every segment of the community.”\textsuperscript{77} Brink knew that through the restoration of its past, Galveston could secure its economic future, and he was truly energized by this challenge.

Peter Brink worked with GHF leaders to create a strong organizational structure headed by powerful community leaders that would be prepared to handle the difficulties presented by a project the size and scope of the Strand. Although the restoration had been a top priority of Emily Whiteside and the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council, and Whiteside played a vital part in bringing Brink to the island, Brink believed the revitalization was his project to lead. He looked forward to working with community leaders and with Arts Council, but he saw GHF as its own independent organization, beholden only to its Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Whiteside perceived the situation differently, leading to conflict between the two leaders. In 1980 Brink described the situation:

\textsuperscript{76} Brink, interview, September 12, 1980; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; Brink, interview, December 2006; Bott, “Peter Brink Directs Local Efforts.”
\textsuperscript{77} Bott, “Peter Brink Directs Local Efforts.”
[Whiteside] saw the Arts Council as being the umbrella for all of the cultural and historical work that was to go on in Galveston. Her dream was that organizations like G.H.F. would then have representatives to the Arts Council. In a sense she would really be coordinating everyone... So it would almost be like a subsidiary of the Arts Council.

I was either too immature or too strongly wanting to run an organization that there were conflicts by Emily and I in those early times, because as I saw my responsibility, it was to reorganize the Historical Foundation and make that a strong community, entity, which would work in partnership with the Arts Council, but I didn’t see it as a subsidiary in any way of another organization. So that led to some real shifts.78

Ed Protz, who worked closely with both Brink and Whiteside, agreed with Brink’s interpretation of events and called the tension between the two “a tragic case of personalities,” and he “[didn’t] know where to lay the feet of blame on that.”79 Brink stood firm in his vision for the Strand, and, at times when his vision and the work of GHF diverged from her opinion of optional plans, Whiteside seemed to want to redirect their efforts. When it became obvious that Brink would not yield to Whiteside on specific issues, she would withdraw support or even take on projects to demonstrate to the Foundation how it should be done. Protz creatively described her attitude as “If you don’t play it my way, I’m going to take my dollies and go home.”80 Regardless of this conflict, they respected each other’s contributions and the two directors worked together successfully on the many projects, such as the Bicentennial, that they agreed upon.81

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78 Brink, interview, December 19, 1980. Junta members Ed Protz and Tim Thompson both recognized this conflict in their discussions of the relationship between Brink and Whiteside. Protz, interview; Thompson, interview.
79 Protz, interview.
80 Ibid., Brink, interview, September 12, 1980; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; Thompson, interview.
81 Brink interview, December 2006; Brink, interview, September 12, 1980; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; Thompson, interview; Protz, interview.
By the time Brink returned to Galveston in early September 1973, Whiteside’s Bicentennial projects were taking off. On August 11 and 12, 1973, the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council hosted their Second Annual Festival on the Strand. GCCAC initially hosted the festival to celebrate the end of the Arts Center’s summer programs and classes. In 1973, however, the festival celebrated not only arts on the Strand but kicked off Galveston’s Bicentennial Celebration.\(^{82}\) At the Festival’s ribbon cutting ceremony, Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe spoke on the importance of Galveston in history and the importance of the proposed restoration of the Strand, stating, “Restoration and revitalization will not only help to retard decay and instill renewed pride in our communities, it will also provide an economic stimulus where it is badly needed.”\(^{83}\)

U.S. Senator John Tower; U.S. Congressman Jack Brooks; acting director of the National American Revolution Bicentennial Commission Hugh Hall; chairman of the Texas American Revolution Commission Sam Kinch, Sr., attended the event as did Galvestonians Judge Ray Holbrook, Mayor R. A. Apffel, State Senator A. R. “Babe” Schwartz, and State Representative Ed. J. Harris. At the event Hall, Kinch, and Books officially proclaimed Galveston’s designation as a National Bicentennial Community and announced the city’s selection as one of the National America Revolution Bicentennial Administration’s three Festival USA pilot project cities. As a pilot project city, Galveston received a $50,000 grant to fund a four-month study on how the city could use the Bicentennial to promote the arts, culture, and history. The GCCAC would oversee

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\(^{83}\) “Galveston Model Bicentennial City.”
the grant and the project, but it would be conducted by a professional four member task force. The results of Galveston’s study would then be printed with those from Quincy, Illinois, and Tacoma, Washington, as a guide for Bicentennial community leaders.84

This Bicentennial project once again brought consultants to the island city who reinforced the importance of historic preservation and the restoration of the Strand. Whiteside hired preservation consultant Ellen Beasley as the coordinator for the project. Beasley, a graduate of the Wintertur Program in Early American Culture, worked for five years with the Properties Committee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and in 1973 she was currently employed by the National Park Service’s Historical American Buildings Survey in Austin. In Galveston she headed a team that also included architectural historian John Maroney, a recent graduate from the University of Texas’ School of Architecture; Jeffrey DeBevec, a graphic artist who worked as public information director of the Galveston Arts Center; Richard Tichich, a photographer for the Galveston Arts Center; and project assistant Kathleen E. Smith. They determined their time would be better spent working with the GCCAC, Whiteside’s Bicentennial Committee, and GHF to consult on and enhance projects already in the works rather than on planning new ventures. In addition to helping to further develop long-range Bicentennial goals and programs such as the preservation of the Strand and the expansion of the Festival on the Strand, the four-month task force worked to collect oral histories, document the Galveston wharves and rural ranch life on the western part of the island,

develop a temporary children's museum on the Strand, and sponsor a “Joy to the World” holiday festival in December 1973.85

After her initial orientation to the island city and its cultural resources, Beasley approached Brink and GHF about renting the Samuel May Williams house. Although GHF used the house for some functions and offered tours, the Williams house was largely under-utilized. Funds from membership dues and the small tour fee could not cover an extensive restoration. Plus, in 1973, GHF was in the midst of restoring Ashton Villa. The Foundation could barely keep up with the house’s basic maintenance requirements and repair the damage done by vandals. GHF and Beasley agreed to a one-year lease with Beasley paying $100 a month. This rent money and the savings in utilities would allow GHF to make some much needed repairs. The house would continue to be open for special tours and to the public on Fridays during the summer months. Beasley believed in adaptive reuse and thought the house museum could better serve GHF as a rental property. She even discussed the “Rental of the Williams House” as a successful preservation achievement in the Bicentennial Task Force’s final report and quoted James Biddle, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, on the rental situation: “more house museums should follow suit.”86

In his first few months as Executive Director, Brink charged forward with his plans for the Strand. He negotiated with the Galveston Board of Realtors to make the sale of the Strand properties a cooperative effort among real estate agents. Fourteen agents initially agreed to jointly list and promote GHF’s revolving fund properties with the six percent sales commission to be divided among them. On November 29, 1973, GHF officially announced the listings, the sale prices, and the deed restrictions that purchasers would be required to follow. GHF summarized the restrictions in the November-December issue of “The Saccarappa”:

Buildings are offered for sale subject to the following deed restrictions (in summary form):

a. Prior written permission of GHF is required for demolition or changes in the exterior except for routine maintenance which does not alter the exterior appearance.
b. The exterior must be kept in a good state of repair so that no deterioration occurs, normal wear and tear excepted.
c. GHF has a right of first refusal on any resale of the property

In addition, purchasers must agree that:

a. The exterior of the building will be restored within an agreed upon time period.
b. An agreed upon sum of money will be invested in the adaptive use of the building within an agreed upon time period.

These restrictions legally bound purchasers to restore the building exteriors and help assure that the building owners would always work together with GHF to achieve their ultimate goal for the Strand. Brink and other Strand supporters envisioned the Strand not just as a cultural arts district but as a popular area for both restaurants and shops and for


offices and residences. For the Strand to be successful for the long-term, the district had to be more than a cultural or tourist area and it needed to draw daily foot traffic. Brink described the project in the *Galveston Daily News*, "It's not just restoring historic buildings, it's helping to create a whole new lifestyle for people tired of suburban living."89

The first revolving fund property sale occurred roughly two weeks after their official market listing. Paul Swain and the Swain Restoration Company, the firm hired by GHF to restore Ashton Villa, purchased the James Fadden Building at 2410-2412 Strand in mid-December 1973. Swain paid the full asking price of $16,000 and agreed to begin restoration of the façade within two months of the closing. Swain envisioned that the building be renovated with a commercial restaurant space on the first floor and apartments or professional offices located the second floor. The Swain purchase excited GHF leaders who hoped that the revolving fund properties would sell quickly to individuals or companies eager to support GHF and the Strand development. Progress, however, came slowly to the Fadden building and in the sale of the other GHF-owned properties.90

In the early fall of 1973 Brink took action towards utilizing the services of known preservationists and urban planners to develop additional studies on the Strand and the work to be done in Galveston. GHF used money from the revolving fund to contract with

89 Bott, "Peter Brink Directs Local Efforts."
the San Antonio architectural firm of Ford, Powell & Carson to develop a plan for the physical development of the Strand.91 Earlier in 1973, the Galveston City Planning Department hired local architect Thomas M. Price to conduct a similar plan. This “Historical Development Plan for Galveston” focused on the opportunities within the Strand district and supplemented the Historical District Guide (used by homeowners in the East End Historic District) Price also prepared for the city. Price cooperated with Brink and GHF when finalizing his report in the fall of 1973 and even included street beautification proposals developed for GHF’s study by Ford, Powell & Carson. Although Price’s plan seemed to rehash recommendations and historic use analysis already presented by GHF, Whiteside, and Galveston’s preservation leaders, its publication helped the city government move forward.92

The Strand Study, as Ford, Powell, and Carson’s final report would come to be known, appeared in February 1974. It first detailed the importance of the Strand as a historical district, classifying it as “one of the finest concentrations of 19th Century commercial buildings in the United States” and discussing the principal issues related to the revitalization of the district, such as parking, the importance of mixed use development, transportation, and funding.93 The Study described the comprehensive preservation effort begun in Galveston in the past decade and recognized the ongoing success of the “community awareness and education” outreach programs initiated by GHF, the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council, and other cultural organizations on

91 Powell, The Strand Study; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, July 20, 1973, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.
93 Powell, The Strand Study, 1.
the island.\textsuperscript{94} It also revealed the importance of the present moment to the future of the city, stating:

Galvestonians have within their grasp the means to double or even triple their income from tourism; to attract research-oriented, clean industries to provide superb residential accommodations on the island; and to enjoy a way of life the envy of most places in the United States. . . .

For Galveston to reap these benefits she must move forcefully to protect and enhance these assets. For the city stands at a crossroads: on the one side lies the quality development suggested above while on the other lies haphazard, short-term exploitation of the beachfront and piecemeal destruction of the rich 19\textsuperscript{th} Century areas by arbitrary demolition and cheap, massed produced construction.\textsuperscript{95}

The Study provided recommendations on physical improvements and an overall concept for the Strand’s restoration. It suggested that GHF (and Galveston’s city planners) focus on “a concept for development that embodies principles which [recognize] a plurality of style” rather than select one specific time period (i.e. 1850s, 1860s, 1880s, or 1900) for overall restoration.\textsuperscript{96} This plan encouraged “the continuity of the street from 20\textsuperscript{th} to 25\textsuperscript{th}” and recommended that individual buildings “be restored to the way it looks best, as long as it is in the spirit of its historic character.”\textsuperscript{97} New buildings could be constructed on the Strand and look as if they fit in with the architectural landscape. Thereby, the Strand Study’s vision for rehabilitation of the district “allows a kind [of] renewal which would provide long range stability through normal economic processes.”\textsuperscript{98} The Study also provided GHF with specific recommendations, detailed plans, and cost estimates for

\textsuperscript{94} Powell, \textit{The Strand Study}, 6.  
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{96} Powell, \textit{The Strand Study}, 25.  
\textsuperscript{97} Powell, \textit{The Strand Study}, 26.  
\textsuperscript{98} Powell, \textit{The Strand Study}, 25.
appropriate street lighting, landscaping, signage, sidewalk construction, and street paving. This study helped Brink and GHF leaders combine their dreams for the Strand with actual design concepts and produce a single document that could be distributed to city, state, and national preservation and city planning decision makers.99

Although the work completed to produce the Strand Study was essential to the early stages of the Strand development, Brink knew that the project needed more than just guidance on how to adapt the physical landscape. When he returned from his honeymoon in September 1973 to start work on the nitty-gritty details of selling the Revolving Fund properties and setting up deed restrictions and façade easements, Brink proposed applying to the NEA for a grant to sponsor the writing of a handbook on legal techniques for preservation by his former employer, preservation attorney Tesh Boasberg. The Strand project would be a case study for Boasberg’s larger work on taxation and historic preservation, and Boasberg would be able to consult with the Foundation on complex legal tax matters. GHF received the $9,000 grant, and Boasberg ultimately published his research as both a 1974 booklet for GHF and as a 1976 article in *The Urban Lawyer*, “Federal Tax Problems Arising from Real Estate Activities of Non-Profit Preservation Organizations.”100

Brink also spent time developing the membership and building organizational support. GHF launched its 1974 membership drive on November 18, 1973, with a lecture

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99 Powell, *The Strand Study*; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, December 13, 1973, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 19, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, May 30, 1974, Box 3, GCCAC Records.
100 Tersh Boasberg, “Federal Tax Problems Arising from Real Estate Activities of Non-Profit Preservation Organizations,” *The Urban Lawyer* 8 no. 1 (1976): 1-53; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, September 11, 1973, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, January 10, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Bill Lacy, Director of Architecture and Environmental Arts, NEA, October 2, 1974, Box 4, GHF Admin Records; Galveston Historical Foundation Annual Report, June 25, 1973-March 12, 1975, Box 4, GHF Admin Records.
by architectural historian Jay E. Cantor. Cantor was visiting the island as part of the Bicentennial Pilot Project and stressed to the members of GHF the importance of historic development for the whole island, not just a small group of buildings. For Cantor, the entire city was historic, and the restoration of residential neighborhoods needed to be considered when designing a citywide preservation plan. In regards to the Strand, he believed, “Variety in the area is important.” Like Brink, Cantor stressed to the membership that business development in the Strand area should interest both tourists and Galvestonians, so islanders would support the area not just as a project but as a part of their hometown. GHF’s membership drive also got a boost from the mayor and City Council, proclaiming November 26 to December 2 “Galveston Historic Preservation Week,” which helped to raise awareness about the power of preservation and the importance of Galveston’s historic treasures. The *Galveston Daily News* promoted GHF during this special event through the publication of articles. In one, Brink took the opportunity to plug the membership campaign, stating, “Members are the name of the game. GHF wants members — 2,000— strong and is earnestly soliciting any person — young, old, devoted or luke-warm — during December and January.” The Foundation ultimately hosted 1,390 members for the year 1974, more than double their

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103 “Local Foundation Pushes Membership Drive: Historic Preservation Week Noted.”
number in years past. Continuing community buy-in and boosting the profile of GHF helped the Foundation achieve progress of its goals.104

By the time GHF sold the second revolving fund property, the Smith Building at 2321 Strand, in mid-March 1974, the restoration activity on the Strand was progressing. GHF promoted the success of Strand retailers including Meyer Reiswerg’s Strand Surplus Senter housed in the Moody Building at 2202-2206 Strand and Estrada’s Wine Importers as much as possible.105 Other retail shops and restaurants were in the works by this time, including Bull Fullen’s Old Strand Emporium, a delicatessen and specialty food store, in the Produce Building at 2114 Strand, Georgette Richmond’s international eatery Café Torrefie in the Mensing Brothers Building at 22nd and Strand, and Vernon Whitehead’s antiques shop in the Blum Building at 23rd and Strand.106 Artists such as painter Joe Glasgow, painter Michael Tracy, and sculptor Harvey Bott lived and worked on the Strand. Bott entered the Strand project early with the development of his Loft-On-The-Strand Gallery at 2118 Strand. By the spring of 1974 he had also converted the second floor of the Mensing Brothers Building for an Art Rehabilitation Therapy Project.107 Converting second and third floor spaces into apartments (and convincing the “right” people to live in them) were crucial to the plan to develop the Strand into an area integral to Galveston life. Peter and Sue Brink moved into an apartment in the Magale

Building at 2313-2315 Strand shortly after their arrival in the fall. Emily Whiteside purchased the Knapp Building and worked with architect O'Neil Ford and Swain Restoration Company to transform the space into three apartments and a small retail area. Physical restoration of the Strand would take time, but within Brink's first year on the island, GHF, GCCAC, and individual Galvestonians made great progress towards the district's turnaround.

In December 1974 GHF began what would become their largest fundraiser, Dickens on the Strand. The Foundation held annual “Old Galveston Christmas” and “Old Fashioned Christmas” parties for members at the Samuel May Williams House beginning in 1964. With all of the restoration activity on the Strand, the Foundation decided to move their annual party from the location of its first restoration project to its latest. The annual parties often made reference to Christmas in days past; in 1973 the theme was “a touch of Old Williamsburg true to Galveston tradition.” In 1974 vice-president of programs Evangeline Whorton proposed an “Old English Christmas and Hanukkah Party” on the Strand. Whorton, one of GHF’s most dedicated volunteers, worked tirelessly as a full-time volunteer on Foundation projects. The party was held on Thursday, December 19, 1974, at Kempner and Strand (the location of the restored First National Bank Building /Center on the Strand and the Junior League’s Trueheart-Adriance Building). Wharton encouraged people to wear costumes, and the Foundation

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advertised that “authentic Dickensera candy, candied fruit, chestnuts, cakes, coffee, spirits and punch with be offered at various locations along the old main street of Galveston.”

Entertainment included a Punch and Judy puppet show, Drew Boggs posing as the town crier, holly vendors, hot roasted chestnut vendors, and music. The party was a great success, and Wharton expanded it into a four-hour “Dickens Evening on the Strand” the following year. In the second year, GHF set up gates to “accept the public’s donation of $1.00 to gain entrance to the event,” and the celebration stretched on the Strand between 21st and 25th Streets.

The 1975 Dickens Evening featured “an atmosphere of Victorian holiday charm” with “costumed shopkeepers” and vendors and a smattering of GHF volunteers and professionals providing live street entertainment. The Foundation decorated the five blocks with period signs, torches, greenery, and volunteers acting as pickpockets and street urchins. Over 6,500 attended the second Dickens Evening on December 18, 1975, and an annual tradition began in earnest. In 1983 the Foundation expanded the evening party to a weekend of events and renamed it simply “Dickens on the Strand” in 1984. “Dickens” brings attention to the Strand project and GHF, attracts tourists during the winter season, and raises thousands of dollars for the Foundation’s projects. Dickens on the Strand continues to be the major annual


fundraising event for the Foundation today and contributes to GHF's success on the Strand.\textsuperscript{114}

The revolving fund money helped ensure that Strand structures would be safe from destruction, but GHF needed buyers; and most preservation-minded buyers needed financial assistance for purchase and rehabilitation. In late January 1974 Brink and Revolving Fund Chairman (and President of Moody National Bank) Gene Wyatt met with the heads of Galveston's major financial institutions to discuss special financial arrangements for the buyers of revolving fund properties. These arrangements would help GHF-supported buyers secure favorable financing and demonstrated the support of Galveston's financial community for GHF and the Strand restoration. Officers of United States National Bank, First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank, Moody National Bank, Guaranty Federal Savings and Loan, Bankers Savings and Loan, and American National Insurance Company all agreed in principle to the idea of a shared risk financing plan, but it was not until August 1974 that GHF and the institutions finalized the details.\textsuperscript{115} The six institutions each agreed to provide a proportion of an amount up to $1 million that was used to fund individual loans for the purchase and restoration of properties owned by GHF's Revolving Fund and for exterior restoration projects on buildings subject to GHF façade restrictions. These twenty-five-year loans could be for up to 75 percent of the total purchase and development cost and would be offered at interest rates a quarter of a percent lower than the Federal Housing Administration's rate. GHF took great care in


approving preservation-minded buyers for their Strand properties, and all loan
applications would be submitted only on GHF’s recommendation. In addition, as all six
financial institutions shared the risk, the loan applicant would be required to satisfy the
standard credit qualifications of each financial institution.116

Although the shared-risk lending agreement seemed ideal, in practice it proved
frustrating; and GHF and the financial institutions modified it after the first year. The
American National Insurance Company required written party-wall agreements for all
financing arrangements, and despite the Foundation’s diligence, the property owners
adjacent to the Smith Building and the Blum Building adamantly refused to sign. A
party-wall agreement formalized the rights and responsibilities of those who share a
common wall and prevented property owners from interfering with the other’s use or
enjoyment of the wall. In other words, it prevented the adjacent building owners from
destroying or altering their shared wall. Without the help of the special financing
agreement, GHF could not sell the properties to interested and otherwise qualified buyers.
In addition, this party-wall agreement requirement limited GHF’s purchase of other
Strand properties to only buildings with party-wall neighbors willing to sign. In a letter
to First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank President, Charles Worthen, Brink described the
situation as “critical” and stated “The question of modifying the financing arrangement to
allow us greater flexibility is not a matter of mere convenience, but rather is essential to
the success of the financing arrangement and thus to The Strand.”117

116 Peter Brink to E. Sid Holliday Jr., March 11, 1974; “$1 Million in Financing Promised for Development of Strand.” 117 Peter Brink to Charles Worthen, July 22, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin Records. In June 1974, Brink also wrote to his colleagues Lee Adler of Savannah, Arthur Ziegler of Pittsburgh, Arthur Skolnik of Seattle, and Edmund Bacon of Philadelphia for advice on the party wall stalemate. Peter Brink to Arthur Skolnick, June 5, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Lee Adler, June 5, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin
participating lenders, except First Hutchings-Sealy, agreed to a modified arrangement that allowed loans to be made by a single lender or a group of lenders, and the new agreement freed loan applicants from the requirement that they fulfill the requirements of all of the lenders. With this new financing deal in place, the Smith Building sold quickly to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Butcher of Houston. The couple secured financing for the building's purchase and a $100,000 renovation from Moody National Bank and United States National Bank, without a signed party-wall agreement from their neighbors.

By the time of the September 1975 sale of the Smith Building, a second study of policy and design recommendations for the development of the Strand had been presented to the Galveston public. In January 1974 GHF sent a City Options Grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts to fund a comprehensive Master Plan for the Strand district. They recognized that although much progress had been made in regards to the planning, "If The Strand effort is going to succeed, however, much more extensive planning work is required during the coming year." Specifically, GHF identified two key elements that they wished to study:

(1) A study of The Strand, adjacent areas, and other significant parts of Galveston to determine their

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120 "Request for City Options Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts,” 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, January 17, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.
relationships and propose a plan including appropriate linking elements.

(2) A study of the traffic, parking and public transportation problems and opportunities in order to generate solutions that are consistent with the unique qualities of The Strand and historic Galveston.¹²¹

GHF continued to connect the Strand project with the upcoming United States Bicentennial, believing that the remaining years before the 1976 celebration provided an ideal time to raise positive awareness for Galveston’s historical treasures and also provided unique federal and state funding opportunities.

On July 11, 1974, United States Senator John Tower announced the award of the $42,000 grant, and GHF formed a committee composed of representatives from various Galveston community and government groups the following month. GHF’s Steering Committee delegated the power for all decisions on the Strand master plan and Strand physical improvements to this committee.¹²² Not everyone, however, celebrated the grant and the development of a master plan for the district. In early October, Peter Brink met with Strand property owners and tenants who raised concerns about the Historical Foundation’s goals and whether the master plan would lead to the implementation of any restrictions on the property owners. Brink tried to reassure those present that the planning firm would seek input and cooperation from owners and tenants in any proposal and, more importantly, he explained that these were simply proposals for action, not

¹²¹ “Request for City Options Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts,” 1974.
¹²² "$42,000 Grant Announced for Strand Master Plan,” Galveston Daily News, July 13, 1974; GHF Press Release “City Option’s Grant Awarded to The Strand,” July 11, 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, July 11, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, August 1, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, August 9, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; “The Strand Planning Committee List,” 1974, Box 3, GCCAC Records; Peter Brink to Strand Planning Committee and GHF Steering Committee, September 20, 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records; Margaret Bott, “Historical Foundation Picks Strand Planners,” Galveston Daily News, November 24, 1974;
regulations. He also assured them that GHF had not taken any action towards the formation of an official local historic district for the Strand. Concerns over restrictive regulations led Strand owners to oppose the formal district designation. GHF wanted to work in cooperation with property owners and believed strongly that the changes on the Strand that they worked towards benefited all through increased property values, an improved economy, and a more beautiful city.  

Over the weekend of November 15 and 16, 1974, the Strand Planning Committee met with nine architecture firms from around the United States. They settled on the Philadelphia firm of Venturi and Rauch, headed by partners Robert Venturi, John Rauch, and Denise Scott Brown. Because of the partners' architectural vision and status within their profession, to some this selection might seem curious, but it can also be interpreted as truly inventive and forward thinking. Robert Venturi's 1966 book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, challenged the strict modernist ideal and guided architects to recognize the beauty that is a part of the multifaceted built environment. In the text, Venturi stated, "I like elements which are hybrid rather than 'pure,' compromising rather than 'clean,' distorted rather than 'straightforward,' ambiguous rather than 'articulate,'" and declared "I am for messy vitality over obvious

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123 Peter Brink to Strand Owners and Tenants, October 8, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.  
124 Bott, "Historical Foundation Picks Strand Planners."  
125 Holmes, "Daring Architects."
unity... I am for richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning.” He also famously mocks' modernist architect Mies van der Rohe's archetypal statement “Less is More” with the assertions, “More is not less” and “Less is a bore.” Venturi followed *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* with a study of Las Vegas, *Learning from Las Vegas*, written with wife Denise Scott Brown and partner Steven Izenour. This text expanded on the idea presented in *Complexity and Contradiction* that the messy commercialized Main Street in American cities “not only possessed visual interest, but that the social forces that produced them were worthy of study and respect.” At the time of their selection for the Strand plan, the firm of Venturi and Rauch had most recently been commissioned by the National Park Service to design a museum and national landmark honoring Benjamin Franklin on a site in Philadelphia where he once lived. Venturi and Scott Brown did not design a conventional museum space but instead envisioned an underground museum with a street-level park dominated by a steel skeleton representing the size, outline, and location of Franklin’s home. The innovative Franklin Court project was completed in time for the city’s Bicentennial Celebration and again revealed how the architectural firm honored the significance of history with creative and innovative contemporary design.

Brink and GHF’s leaders liked the work of the firm, particularly their varied Bicentennial projects, and valued the fresh, innovative perspective that they could

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127 Venturi, 23, 25.
provide to the Strand’s master plan. Denise Scott Brown, who focused most of her work on urban planning, spearheaded their November 1974 proposal and later the project itself. She stated in the firm’s proposal their goal to “approach the Strand’s architecture with deep historical insight and sympathy, yet understand that its future vitality and aesthetic delight can be impeded by too much tight control on users and owners and too narrow a view of what constitutes architectural harmony.”\(^{131}\) This vision meshed well with the concept of the Strand as a historical district not rooted in one time period, as described in Ford, Powell, and Carson’s Strand Study. Scott Brown further articulated her firm’s philosophy in respect to the project:

> Our experience as architects and urbanists convinces us that, in urban design, if there is to be art at all, it will be drawn from reality, sometimes from hard reality and especially from economic reality. As practitioners, we tend to mistrust utopian, urban proposals for some long range, future date, or proposals involving radical change particularly in social or economic customs. We also mistrust over-scaled, built-at-one-time, over-integrated, physical solutions.\(^{132}\)

In the following months, the firm went to work on what would become known as “The Action Plan for the Strand” and presented the material from their final report to GHF’s Strand Planning Committee and the Galveston public in July 1975. The final written report followed in November.\(^{133}\) Venturi and Rouch submitted a plan that not only provided a general conceptual vision for the area but also provided specific physical recommendations, cost analysis and market research, and ideas for marketing and development. They believed that the cultural arts activities and the city’s dedication to

\(^{131}\) Bott, “Historical Foundation Picks Strand Planners.”
\(^{132}\) Ibid.
the United States Bicentennial helped “give The Strand an excitement absent in many other preservation efforts.” Further, they recognized the significance of the Strand’s island location and its proximity to a working port, stating, “The bustle of the port, the juxtaposition of huge moving freighters against ornamental Victorian buildings just a block away, create a romantic aura unique in American cities.” The firm closed their introduction in the Action Plan with their general concept for the district:

We feel these qualities of The Strand can be exploited through sympathetic restoration to vitalize its economic and civic file and enhance its attractiveness. But a Williamsburg-like historical accuracy throughout is unappropriate to an active, multi-purpose street, and indeed would be unattainable in terms of cost and restrictions upon private development. Strand developers should strive to restore street facades authentically, but otherwise they should use historical imagery artistically and symbolically. Restoration of interiors should be artful but impressionistic, the total effect eclectic rather than pure, as in the Roman palazzo with a stunning modern bar under the awning on the ground floor. Juxtaposing the new and vital with the old and symbolic will help The Strand to become, not a museum but a real place that enhances the life of Galveston’s citizens and dramatizes the experience of its visitors.

This plan encouraged both the restoration of building facades and new construction. It promoted the expansion of cultural activities and retail developments and sought “to develop functional linkages to activities throughout Galveston” such as UTMB, the wharves, and the beach. Venturi and Rauch made specific suggestions of physical improvements that could be made immediately in the Strand area that would better unify the district and “make a walk along The Strand a journey through time, where history is

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juxtaposed with what is and what will be.” Some of the immediate actions included having property owners paint the trim and woodwork on Strand structures and install appropriate signs. Signage recommendations were an important component of the Action Plan for The Strand, and the Action Plan offered suggestions on private retail signs, official Texas Historical Commission markers, informational building pictorial signs, promotional billboards, and precinct signs that announced entry into the historical Strand area. The Action Plan also suggested that a mural of what the Strand would look like once fully restored should be painted on the east wall of the Flood and Calvert building. This mural would help promote the revitalization and encourage visitors to consider the “juxtaposition of future and present reality.” The plan further recommended the placement of exhibits that featured both Galveston and Strand history and special events in the first floor windows of Strand businesses that do not rely on pedestrian traffic, such as Flood and Calvert, the marine and industrial hardware suppliers at 2314 Strand. These exhibits would not only form an outside “museum” for the district but they would assist in the creation of a “visual and perceptual link” from one section of the district to another. The Plan also laid out recommendations on parking, improving traffic flow, and creating pedestrian walkways between the wharves and Galveston’s modern business district. Moreover, Venturi and Rauch took the financial feasibility of these improvements and restoration into consideration. They analyzed data on the residential, commercial, and leisure markets in the area and made recommendations on the economic feasibility of the mixed-use development. They established a three-phase development

plan that could be adapted to the changing Galveston economy. GHF’s Strand Planning Committee welcomed the recommendations made by the firm and unanimously approved the Action Plan for The Strand as “a working plan for restoration and revitalization of The Strand” at their September 20, 1975, meeting.

GHF actually initiated funding requests for many of the ideas presented in the Action Plan for the Strand months prior to the official presentation. In April 1975 the Foundation submitted a $59,000 matching grant request to the American Revolutionary Bicentennial Administration for the development of a “Street Museum” for the Strand. This “museum” would be constructed conceptually along five blocks of the Strand district. A series of Bicentennial and historical exhibits, educational building signs, the Strand rendering, and Bicentennial banners with informational stands marking the entrance to the Strand comprised this open-air museum. GHF attempted to please the Bicentennial Committee throughout the spring, but by early July abandoned hope that the Street Museum would be funded. Brink appealed to Galveston City Manager Jack Nichols for the financial assistance required to implement many of the Street Museum concepts in time for the 1976 celebration. In August the city council allocated $19,500

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141 "The Strand: Action Plan," *The Saccarappa,* November-December 1975. Although they unanimously agreed to accept the plan, not everyone agreed with its ranking of improvement priorities and design suggestions. In a September 21, 1975 memo, Emily Whiteside articulated her objections. She opposed the idea of signage as the most important priority. Specifically, she argued against the design submitted by Venturi and Rauch and the idea in general stating, “I suggest that if a banner of this trivial type has to tell you that you’ve ‘arrived’ then the person looking at four magnificent blocks of 19th buildings will never ‘see them.”’ She also opposed the Strand rendering mural and accepted the informational building signs only “if placed carefully and not allowed to treat the magnificent vista of the long, wide stretch of sidewalks.” Emily Whiteside, Memorandum, September 21, 1975, Box 3, GCCAC Records.
142 R.A. Apffel to John W. Warner, Administrator American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, April 14, 1975, Box 4, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Lloyd Bentsen, April 18, 1975, Box 4, GHF Admin Records; “Street Museum on The Strand,” Grant Proposal for Matching Grant Assistance to Non-Profit Organizations for Bicentennial Projects which are of Special National or International Significance, April 1975, Box 4, GHF Admin Records.
143 Peter Brink to Jack Nichols, July 3, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin Records.
of the city’s HUD Community Development Funds to GHF. Of this, $6000 was intended for the construction of five building signs each featuring a nineteenth-century picture of the structure and informational text. At the time of the award, four of the five buildings had been selected: Hendley Row, the Moody Building, the Stewart Title Building, and the First National Bank Building; however, it was not until July 1977 that the first sign (documenting the W. L. Moody Building) appeared. The bulk of the funds were intended to reconstruct the wooden canopies on the Mensing Brothers Building on the northeast corner of Strand and 22nd Street and on the Moody Building on the northwest corner. The money funded only half of the canopy project and owners needed to secure additional funding. GHF did not own façade easements on either of the two buildings, and the owner of the Moody Building, Meyer Reiswerg, adamantly refused to sell one. Reiswerg was, however, supportive of the canopy, and even a Venturi and Rauch designed sign for his Strand Surplus Senter. The Venturi and Rauch Action Plan strongly supported the construction of the canopies not only because they once lined the Strand but also because they provide a shaded, rainproof walkway for tourists and other pedestrians. As with the pictorial signs, however, progress on their construction took time. Reiswerg never constructed a canopy for the Moody Building, and the Mensing Building did not receive its canopy until its 1976-77 restoration.

After continued discussions with city manager Jack Nichols in the summer of 1975, Brink applied to the City Council in August for $40,000 to pay for overall physical


145 Peter Brink to Meyer Reiswerg, November 4, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; Joint Meeting of GHF Steering Committee and Revolving Fund Committee Minutes, December 11, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Stanley Tariala, Venturi and Rauch, August 7, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin Records.

146 Beasley and Fox, 22, 23; “Another Part of historical Galveston was literally dug up Thursday,” Galveston Daily News, July 8, 1977.
improvements on the Strand. The final request, submitted in September, asked for $5,000 for the construction of five additional pictorial building signs, $5,000 for the repair and restoration of two Rosenberg Fountains (Henry Rosenberg funded the installation of a total of 17 drinking fountains in the late nineteenth century), $3,000 for a trompe l’oeil or “trick of the eye” mural of an iron façade on the Springer Building, and $27,000 for “Assistance to the Strand Revolving Fund.” In Brink’s initial request this money had been specifically designated for the design and installation of the Strand historical exhibits and for the painting of the Strand rendering mural described by Venturi and Rauch, but the amended request freed the funds so they could be spent basically in almost any way that benefited the Strand, including the purchase of façade easements, promotional work, or architectural planning and research.147 That fall, the city agreed to allocate $35,000 from its 1976 budget for the Strand project in honor of the Bicentennial.148 By the time of the 1976 Fourth of July celebrations, GHF had completed the trompe l’oeil mural on the Springer Building, made plans for the opening of exhibits on preservation located in the lobby of the Santa Fe Building, and continued to earmark the reminder of the funds for the pictorial building signs and the creation of a landscaped sitting area on the Strand. The Rosenberg Fountain project had been largely dropped.149

The settlement of the special financing arrangement and the elimination of the written party-wall agreement in fall 1975 also helped encourage the sale of the largest building owned by GHF’s Revolving Fund, the Blum Building (now known as the T.J. League Building) at the corner of 23rd and Strand, to Houston developer George Mitchell.

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147 Peter Brink to Jack Nichols, August 28, 1978, Box 5, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Jack Nichols, September 19, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records.
Mitchell, born on the island in 1919 to Greek immigrants, made millions of dollars in both the oil and gas industry and real estate development. His best-known development is the planned community north of Houston, The Woodlands. Mitchell’s September 1976 purchase of the Blum Building was his official entry into the Strand project and historical preservation in Galveston. Over thirty years later, the work done by Mitchell and his wife, Cynthia, has resulted in the restoration of seventeen historic buildings on the island, including the Tremont Hotel and the Hotel Galvez. They are often touted in the local and national press as saviors of the island’s past, and their $60 million investment in Galveston’s history is truly remarkable. Although inaccuracies and half truths surround the legend of the Mitchells’ involvement in the Strand, without the couple, it is doubtful that the Strand project would have been so successful.150

Brink initiated discussions with George Mitchell regarding the Strand during his first year on the island. Although not involved with the Historical Foundation and a Houston resident, Mitchell was a well-known individual around Galveston. He was just the type of investor Brink believed would bring credibility and money to the Strand. Mitchell physically left the island to attend Texas A&M University and to pursue his career, but his heart never left. Mitchell, and his brother and business partner, Johnny, believed in Galveston and invested in their hometown. The third Mitchell brother,

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150 The most glaring inaccuracy circulating around George Mitchell’s involvement is that the Strand project was his idea and/or that Mitchell was involved from the absolute beginning. One version of the story is that Mitchell returned from a trip to Charleston and Savannah in the early 1970s eager to do for Galveston what he saw there. After sponsoring a trip for islanders to the restored cities, Mitchell and the newly converted preservationists convinced Mary Moody Northen to finance the Revolving Fund and hire Brink. The truth of what really happened lies somewhere between Mitchell and his wife observing the decay of the city in the 1960s, their friendship with a preservation-minded Savannah banker, their dedication to Mitchell’s hometown, and Brink soliciting them in the mid-1970s. Regardless of the myth, the Mitchells’ involvement drastically aided the Strand and the quality of preservation in Galveston. Brink, interview, December 2006; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; Marsh Davis and Joe Pratt, “An Interview with George Mitchell,” The Houston Review of History and Culture (Spring 2006): 43-48, 68-71; “The Mitchell Challenge,” Galveston Preservation News, Summer 2004, 14-17; “The IBM George Mitchell Interview,” In Between, April 1979, 7, 9.
Christie, a self-declared “beachcomber,” never left the island. In the 1960s the Mitchells’ firm started work on the Pirates Beach development on the West End and even drilled off-shore for oil. They purchased a large section of Pelican Island, north of Galveston Island, with the initial plan to develop medium-cost housing on the site and donated forty acres of the land to the Texas Maritime Academy, now Texas A&M at Galveston, to help promote educational opportunities for Galvestonians. In the early 1970s the Mitchells purchased twenty-two acres of the Fort Crockett property that ultimately they developed into the San Louis Hotel, Condominium, and Conference Center complex. On a more personal level, Mitchell and his wife established a second home on the island early in their marriage, and as he tells the story:

My family spent a great deal of time in Galveston when our children were young and I remember every time we passed the downtown area, my wife, Cynthia, would say ‘Someone should really do something about saving those beautiful buildings. It would be such a shame to see them torn down.’ Like so many other native Galvestonians, I too, was disturbed by the continuing deterioration of Galveston’s downtown area. By the 1950s and -60s, some of the more neglected buildings fell to the wrecking ball — a sad fate for once stunning examples of Victorian architecture. People who lived downtown were unable to get together to restore the buildings. Galveston had the best Victorian architecture in the Southwest. It deserved to be protected.

The Mitchells also observed deterioration in the residential areas. In 2006 he elaborated: 
"We noticed, driving around, all the destruction of the beautiful homes on Broadway. Every corner was being supplemented by service station sites or strip center sites. They were destroying the whole fabric of the town. And that bothered Cynthia and me. And, of course, that made us aware." George Mitchell was just the man Brink needed to buy in to his plans for the Strand, but it took a little time and just the right development opportunity.

In the mid-1970s, Mitchell funneled his investment in Galveston through his business, Mitchell Energy and Development, but George and Cynthia Mitchell personally purchased the Blum/League Building in 1976. As early as January 1974, Brink believed Mitchell to be a reasonable prospect for a Strand building restoration. It took over two years of negotiations, however, to close the deal. GHF first accepted an offer from Mitchell Energy and Development to purchase the building and the adjacent Bock property in August 1974, but the parties had difficulty securing amenable funding from the usual Galveston sources. Brink knew the importance of having Mitchell involved with the Strand. In November, while urging Mitchell to compromise with the Galveston lenders, he wrote, "There is nothing more crucial for the Strand project than your going ahead with the development of the Blum Building. Your involvement will bring a level of taste, quality, and expertise essential to The Strand's success." In September and October, Brink wrote to prestigious friends of GHF including Texas Senator John Tower, Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe, and Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior,

154 GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, January 17, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, January 24, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.
155 Peter Brink to George Mitchell, November 5, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, August 9, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.
Rogers C.B. Morton, asking them to write Mitchell to encourage his plans to restore the Blum/League Building. By January 1975 a general agreement on financing from the Galveston long-term financing pool had been reached, and Brink again urged Mitchell’s firm to finalize the deal. Problems in securing the party wall agreement and finalizing the funding continued. Although Mitchell conducted an Economic and Functional Analysis of the project and applied for a $30,000 matching grant from the Texas Historical Commission to aid in the building’s restoration, Mitchell Energy and Development dropped the project in the fall of 1975.

George Mitchell himself did not give up on the Blum Building, and in February 1976 he called Brink to re-open the discussion. Brink later credited the saving of the project to Cynthia Mitchell, stating, “I think part of that is because of his wife, who really thought strongly about it and she is a woman of real taste and intellect. She wanted to see it happen.” The deal finally closed in early September 1976, and GHF announced the Mitchells’ plans to fully restore the exterior and renovate the first floor space into a restaurant and retail shops by July 1977. GHF Vice-President of the Revolving Fund Drew Boggs commented on the importance of the Blum/League Building project:

By the end of 1976 the Blum Building and the four buildings adjacent to it will all be undergoing comprehensive restoration and renovation. This activity will result in ten new retail establishments and ten new apartment units. These, plus the other strong developments taking place along The Strand, will take The Strand a long way to being a major asset to Galveston in terms of

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156 Peter Brink To John Tower, September 26, 1974, Box 4, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Rogers, C.B., Morton, October 11, 1975, Box 4, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Dolph Briscoe, October 11, 1974, Box 4, GHF Admin Records.
157 Peter Brink to Chris Brown, Mitchell Development Corporation of the Southwest, January 22, 1975, Box 4, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Arthur Alpert, September 2, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin Records; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980.
158 Peter Brink to John Samuels, February 12, 1976, Box 7, GHF Admin Records.
159 Brink, interview, December 19, 1989.
downtown revitalization, housing, and year-round visitor attraction.\[^{160}\]

The Mitchells’ nearly $1.5 million renovation of the League Building by San Antonio Architect Boone Powel resulted in the opening of the popular Wentletrap Restaurant, the restoration of the structure’s 200-foot-long cast iron façade, and ignited a genuine passion for preservation in George and Cynthia Mitchell.\[^{161}\]

At the time of the Mitchell’s September 1976 purchase of the Blum/League Building, the GHF Board was considering their future on the Strand. In March 1976 GHF moved its offices from the Stewart Title Building to space donated by the Moody Foundation in the recently acquired Santa Fe Building. Stewart Title embarked on a full restoration of their 1882 building at the corner of 22\(^{nd}\) Street and Mechanic in 1976, and the growing Foundation needed the additional office space provided in the vast Santa Fe Building. As the Moody Foundation made plans for the building’s renovation, Ed Protz notified Brink in July 1976 that the Historical Foundation would likely be moved to another less desirable space in 1977 and at some point would be required to pay rent. GHF needed to consider a permanent office. Repeated moves cost the foundation money and hindered the limited office staff. Brink believed that the best option for a headquarters would be on the Strand in a restored building as part of the developing community. In order to best support its most important projects, GHF needed to remain visible and accessible to visitors, property owners, and tenants of the Strand. After considering his options, Brink approached the Executive Committee about renovating the


\[^{161}\] “Request by the Historical Foundation to the Moody Foundation for an Operating Grant for Calendar Year 1978,” December 1, 1978, Box 16, GHF Admin Records; Beasley and Fox, 21; Mark Jenkins, “How Entrepreneurs Do It,” Historic Preservation (June 1985): 31.
Western Section of the Hendley Building as a visitors’ center and GHF office. GHF acquired the Western Section of the Building in 1968 though a donation from Sally and John Wallace. The Foundation offered it for sale with other Revolving Fund Properties in 1973, but despite numerous offers, the structure remained unsold. The Texas Historical Commission previously granted GHF a $30,000 matching grant for restoration work on the Hendley Building, and it was a natural choice for GHF’s permanent offices. GHF’s Executive Committee agreed with Brink’s suggestion and decided to take time to determine how to best proceed.¹⁶²

GHF readdressed the situation and began to make plans for their new institutional home the following May. In addition to the grant from the Texas Historical Commission, the city allocated $20,000 in HUD Community Development Block Grant funds and, as GHF considered its options, an anonymous donor granted $5000 to initiate work on the architectural plans.¹⁶³ By late October 1977 the Foundation selected Taft Architects to handle the project. At that time, GHF estimated the restoration would cost $250,000 and involve the restoration of the front façade, the resolution of structural problems, and the transformation of 5,000 square feet on the first floor into a visitor’s center and public exhibition space and 3,500 square feet of second floor into offices. In the fall of 1977 the

¹⁶² Peter Brink, “Office Space, Ed Protz Notes” July 27, 1976, Box 1, Galveston Historical Foundation Records MS#90-0025 (hereafter cited as GHF Records), GTHC; Drew Boggs and Peter Brink to Members of the GHF Executive Committee, “Development of GHF Permanent Offices in the West Section of Hendly Row,” July 1976, Box 2, GHF Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, July 28, 1976, Box 8, GHF Admin Records; Texas Historical Commission Press Release, “Agency Awards 12 Preservation Grants,” July 23, 1976, Box 8, GHF Admin Records; Form Letter Draft, Peter Brink to all 19 Prospects for the West Section of Hendley Row, August 4, 1976, Box 8, GHF Admin Records; “Development of Permanent Offices and Public Exhibit Areas by the Galveston Historical Foundation in the 1859-1867 West Section of Hendley Row, The Strand National Historic Landmark District,” October 10, 1977, Box 12, GHF Admin Records; Beasley and Fox, 33.
¹⁶³ GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, May 17, 1977, GHF Archives; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 19,1977, Box 11, GHF Admin Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, June 9, 1977, GHF Archives; Agenda for Special Hendley Building Committee Meeting, June 10, 1977, Box 11, GHF Admin Records.
need for a larger work space was clear. Although the Foundation paid only four full-time employees (executive director, Ashton Villa administrator and two secretaries) and two part-time workers (bookkeeper and membership secretary), it needed space for its army of volunteers to work on their projects. GHF also had seven Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) employees, including a researcher and a public relations person, paid through the job program. Most importantly, the Hendley Building provided space for GHF to have a Visitors Center on the Strand. The Foundation displayed an exhibit, organized as part of the Action Plan for the Strand improvements, in the lobby of the Santa Fe Building, but the first floor of the Hendley Building would be a highly visible and accessible space where exhibitions on the Strand and the Port of Galveston could be displayed and GHF could also host a multi-media presentation to further visitors’ understanding of Galveston’s history and its importance as the “Wall Street of the Southwest.”  

As the plans for the Hendley Building restoration developed, GHF focused on raising the funds required. It applied for additional HUD Community Development Funds from the City, and was awarded an additional $25,000 in the fall of 1977. The Foundation also reached out to almost fifty private foundations throughout Texas and the nation. By the first week of January 1978, the Foundation raised a total of $100,000, including $10,000 from the Brown Foundation of Houston, and planned to begin

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164 "Development of Permanent Offices and Public Exhibit Areas," October 10, 1977; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, October 31, 1977, GHF Archives.
165 GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, October 31, 1977; GHF to Marshall Wells, Coordinator of Grants, Houston Endowment, October 18, 1977, Box 12, GHF Admin Records; GHF to Brown Foundation, October 18, 1977, Box 12, GHF Admin Records; GHF to Sid Richardson Foundation, October 18, 1977, Box 12, GHF Admin Records; GHF to Cooper Industries, October 18, 1977, Box 12, GHF Admin Records.
construction in June. The grants continued to trickle in, and in mid-July GHF announced the award of a $25,000 challenge grant from the Troy, Michigan-based Kresge Foundation. This grant, GHF's first from a foundation of national scope based outside of Texas for a community project, represented a shift in the Foundation's fundraising; however, most of the money raised for GHF projects continued to come from Texas sources. The discovery of additional structural problems with the west wall increased the cost of the project significantly to $374,000. Initial structural analysis of the wall indicated the need for a new supporting wall with an estimated cost of $70,000. In October 1978 the wall was determined to need even more support in the form of a system of steel buttresses and a new five-foot-wide structure to house plumbing, electrical, and climate control systems. This design not only increased the construction costs, but it required the purchase of a small strip of land directly adjacent to the Hendley Building's west wall. Fortunately, GHF supporters Jack and Sally Wallace owned the land and sold it for fair market value. Fundraising efforts proceeded at a steady pace, and GHF intensified its efforts as costs rose.

The restoration both cost more and lasted longer than GHF expected. Initially the Foundation expected to begin construction in early 1978 and move its offices in the middle of the year. As plans developed, the Foundation pushed the construction start date to June 1978 and then even later when faced by a lack of construction bids. In late October 1978 GHF granted the construction contract to Trentham Corporation of Houston, the only contractor to submit a bid. The renovation work finally began in February 1979.\textsuperscript{170} The Foundation moved its offices as soon as renovations to the second floor were complete. In true island volunteer style, GHF did not simply hire movers. Instead, Brink invited the community to "an old-fashioned 'barn-raising' and pot luck supper" and asked volunteers (particularly those with pickup trucks) to gather on the afternoon of Saturday September 22, 1979, to move furniture and boxes to the new space.\textsuperscript{171} Construction continued on the first floor Visitor’s Venter and GHF celebrated its completion with an open house on January 27, 1980. Approximately 400 people


\textsuperscript{170} “Development of Permanent Offices and Public Exhibit Areas,” October 10, 1977; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, October 31, 1977, GHF Archives; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, September 19, 1978, GHF Archives; Executive Committee Meeting with Members of the Hendley Building Committee Minutes, October 27, 1978, GHF Archives; “Welcome to the 1855 Hendley Building (West Section)!” January 27, 1980, Box 2, GHF Records.

attended the celebration and formal dedication of the building. The Strand Visitors Center featured exhibits on the preservation effort in Galveston and the island’s history and hosted a special theater where a short film on the *Elissa* sailing ship restoration played repeatedly. In all, the Hendley Building project cost $405,000 and was funded through grants from the Texas Historical Commission, the city of Galveston’s HUD Community Development Funds, and various foundations and individuals, including the Brown Foundation, the Cullen Foundation, Robert Sealy, the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund, and the Rockwell Fund. One foundation that did not donate was the Moody Foundation. It funded many GHF projects and helped through annual operating grants. Brink had assured Mary Moody Northen that GHF would not ask her to financially support this specific project — he even joked about it publicly at the building’s dedication. The restoration of the Hendley Building and the opening of the Strand Visitors Center was a major accomplishment in the progress of the overall Strand project, and GHF’s first permanent offices signified part of its transformation from a small volunteer historical society into a professional non-profit institution.¹⁷²

In 1980, when GHF opened the Strand Visitors Center, Galveston’s preservationists could claim success on the Strand. They had accomplished so much in the seven years since Peter Brink’s arrival on the island. Brink believed that in 1980 GHF had reached its first plateau in the development of the Strand and the Foundation was on its way to reaching a new level. He wrote of historic preservation and the status

As GHF soon learned, however, much more than buying and selling was needed to do the job. . . . GHF also learned that its goal of attaining a 'critical mass' on The Strand (a concentration of sufficient activity so that everything would snowball by itself) was an elusive one. The summit of the mountain always seemed to be the next task: first it was the selling of several buildings, then helping owners to find tenants, then providing appropriate support for the shops to succeed, and always working to make the area safe and livable. As each task was accomplished, the next became crucial.173

By 1980 the Strand had drawn in over $6 million in private for-profit investment and an additional $7 million outlay was planned. The Strand Project also received $300,000 of United States Department of Interior Grant-in-Aid Funds allocated by the Texas Historical Commission between 1975 and 1980 for the “acquisition, development, and planning of The Strand District.”174 Preservation-minded businessmen rehabilitated and brought back to life twenty buildings. Shops and restaurants attracted locals to the Strand and pulled tourists from the beaches. Investors completed thirty apartments in Strand buildings and residential tenants added to the daily atmosphere of the district. Plus, events such as Dickens Evening on the Strand and the GCCAC’s Festival on the Strand drew both tourists and islanders to the historic district and brought media attention to the Foundation’s work. In 1980 Brink rated the overall success of the Strand as “medium to good” at that time; however, he believed, “We’re doing things that really are paying off

for the community."\textsuperscript{175} Although somewhat supportive, the Galveston City Council had not fully embraced the idea of the economic benefit of historic tourism, nor had the Chamber of Commerce. The Strand, a National Historic Landmark District, had yet to be designated as a local historic district. Also in the late 1970s, although many succeeded, GHF still had trouble attracting small business owners to invest in the district. Brink stated, "The Strand is not a gold mine. You have to really be good, and if you are you'll make it."\textsuperscript{176} Regardless of these challenges, in 1973 Brink's initial goal was to use the revolving fund to bring life back into the Strand. By 1980 this had unquestionably been accomplished.

\textsuperscript{175} Brink, interview, September 12, 1980; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980; "Testimony by Peter H. Brink submitted to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs"; Brink, "The Strand: Economic Renewal through Historic Preservation," 33.

\textsuperscript{176} Brink, interview, September 12, 1980; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980.
In the mid- to late 1970s, Galveston faced three significant challenges to the overall Strand Project. These battles over the island’s historic treasures challenged GHF leaders to examine their goals for the city and for their local preservation movement. While the first, a rather straightforward struggle to save the Santa Fe Building, ended by early 1976 and with a positive result, the other two, a bitter multi-year controversy over Galveston’s Mosquito Fleet and Pier 19 and the explosive fight to prevent the destruction of the 1860 Ufford Building at the corner of Tremont and Mechanic, taught GHF to carefully weigh the consequences of public action. The Pier 19 controversy divided the city and GHF leaders. It challenged the burgeoning organization to make crucial decisions about its relationships with community institutions, such as the City Council, and its individual members. GHF went to extremes for the Ufford Building, even staging a three hour sit-in to prevent action by a demolition crew. Although this fight did not divide GHF internally, as the Pier 19 controversy did, actions taken by Brink and other eager leaders damaged the Foundation’s public reputation. Together, these three examples reveal the things that GHF was willing to do for its preservation goals and provide evidence of GHF’s position in the island’s power matrix.

The white terra cotta, eleven story, Art Deco-style Santa Fe Railroad building stands commandingly at the Strand’s western terminus at 25th Street. Constructed in 1913 with an addition built in 1932, the rail station and office building sits on the site of the 1897 Victorian Romanesque-style passenger station. The building served as the regional headquarters for the Atcheson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad until 1965, when the
The office was closed. Passenger rail service in Galveston ended in 1967, but the United States Corps of Engineers filled the office space until its move to a new headquarters near UTMB. As of late 1973, the building stood virtually empty. Galvestonians worried about the future of the structure. Historically and aesthetically, it represented a different era than the one promoted by the Strand restoration, but nevertheless it served as a reminder of the importance of the railroad in Galveston’s history. In addition, its imposing size and location at the western end of the Strand made its future a critical issue in planning for the Strand project. Early discussions on the Strand revitalization included hope that one day passenger service between Galveston and Houston would return. The Santa Fe Building could serve as the passenger terminal with day-tripping Houstonians exiting directly into the historic district. In November 1973 Brink wrote to the Galveston attorney for the railroad, Ballinger Mills, asking the Santa Fe to consider donating their structure to GHF, but little came from this request.

An idea that Galveston College, the county’s community college founded in 1967, would purchase and renovate the building with financial assistance from the Moody Foundation, circulated the island in the spring of 1974. Brink wrote in early April to GHF supporter Mary Moody Northen about the significance of the structure to Galveston and to the Strand project, urging her to support the idea financially. He wrote:

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The Santa Fe, with its eleven stories at the end of The Strand, dominates the avenue and provides a clear separation between The Strand, and the industrial and blighted areas to the west. While the Santa Fe does not possess the historical or architectural value of the 19th century Strand buildings, its demolition and replacement by steel warehouses or other industrial uses would hurt tremendously our effort to save and restore The Strand Buildings.\(^3\)

The railroad had formally offered the building and its three and a half blocks of land to the college in March, but the offer was not confirmed publicly by the college until May. Galveston College studied the feasibility of renovating the building and leasing the office space they did not need but concluded that the building’s maintenance and operation expenses would prove to be too large of a financial burden. Galveston College’s board of regents turned down the offer in June.\(^4\)

Galvestonians did not abandon hope for the building, and the city’s Chamber of Commerce continued its own building use study as Brink and GHF worked on their plan. As Brink articulated the situation to Mary Moody Northen, the Santa Fe Building was significant to the city and to GHF’s preservation efforts on the Strand. GHF supported the sale of the building to preservation-minded developer Walter Teachworth and the couple Lyda Ann and J. Redmond Thomas. Mrs. Thomas was a member of the Kempner family, and Teachworth had purchased the Strand’s Smith Building in March 1974. In October, Teachworth and the Thomas’ submitted their purchase offer of $268,000 with $35,000 down and the rest paid over the next ten years. The Santa Fe Railway Company instead accepted a competing offer from local construction company owner T.R. Hencey

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\(^3\) Peter Brink to Mary Moody Northen, April 4, 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records.  
and Texas City CPA Ben M. Guynes, who indicated they would use the building for storage.\(^5\)

In mid-November, when word reached the island that the Chicago-based railroad had accepted Hencey and Guynes’s offer, subject to approval by Santa Fe’s board of directors, Brink mobilized to fight the sale. He wrote directly to John S. Reed, President and Chairman of the Board of Santa Fe Railway Company, asking him to vote against the sale. He offered $200,000 in cash if they would sell to the Foundation and reminded Reed of the purchase offer from Teachworth and the Thomases. Brink stressed the importance of the building and the city’s preservation movement, writing, “The Santa Fe Building is the ‘flagship’ of The Strand; visually and in terms of square feet it dominates The Strand. Demolition of the building will be disastrous. The dead warehouse space which Messrs. Hencey and Guynes have committed its use will have a crippling impact on a dynamic, creative and constructive movement.”\(^6\) Brink also asked for and received support for his fight from the Chamber of Commerce at their November 21, 1974, meeting. The Chamber’s board of directors agreed to send telegrams to the railroad voicing their opposition of the sale to Hencey and Guynes. The Santa Fe Railway Company responded to the protest with a phone call inviting Peter Brink to meet with Reed in Chicago the following day.\(^7\)

Brink returned to Galveston encouraged by his meeting with Reed and by the Santa Fe Board of Directors’ lack of action at their November 26, 1974, meeting. The

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\(^{6}\) Peter Brink to John S. Reed, November 20, 1974; Peter Brink to Mary Moody Northen, April 4, 1974; Bryant, “Move to Block Sale of Santa Fe Building Begun.”

sale to Hencey and Guynes needed board approval, and, later, due to "all the uncertainty" surrounding the sale, the Railway Company decided to reject the offer. Hencey and Guynes filed a suit in district court demanding that Santa Fe sell them the building or pay $400,000 in damages.\(^8\) As the lawsuit pended, the Santa Fe Railway Company left the building on the market, without a set price. The Moody Foundation again came through for Galveston and the Strand project. In the spring of 1975, it offered to purchase the building for the same price Hencey and Guynes offered. Brink wrote to company president, Reed, to voice his support for the Moody Foundation’s offer and also to thank him for not selling in November. Brink even offered “to do everything possible to obtain strongly favorable publicity for your company if a sale consistent with the interests of The Strand project and Galveston can be worked out by you.”\(^9\)

Although the sale of the Santa Fe Building to the Moody Foundation did not close until a year later, in 1976 Peter Brink and GHF succeeded in saving the valuable structure from decay and destruction and they secured the type of restoration that would most benefit the overall Strand restoration. The Moody Foundation announced its purchase of the Santa Fe Building and their plans for its restoration on March 1, 1976. The Foundation hired The Strand Study architects Ford, Powell, and Carson to prepare the restoration plan and intended the building to be developed into a multi-purpose community center with space for classrooms, meeting rooms, and offices. Plans were also made to utilize the railroad station as a museum.\(^10\) The Galveston Historical

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\(^8\) "Santa Fe Building Sale Not Considered by Board," *Galveston Daily News*, November 27, 1974; Bott, “Santa Fe Building For Sale - - At Negotiable Price.”

\(^9\) Peter Brink to John Reed, April 17, 1975, Box 4, GHF Admin Records.

Foundation moved from offices in the Stewart Title Building into space in the Santa Fe Building in early March and utilized a portion of the central concourse for historic and promotional exhibits.\textsuperscript{11} The building officially reopened in 1981 as Shern Moody Plaza, and in 1982, the Galveston Railroad Museum opened to the public.\textsuperscript{12} This straightforward struggle ended without too much discontent. The railroad ultimately cooperated and the Moody Foundation came through with the funding. The conflict did not require GHF to go beyond established lobbying techniques. Although important at the time and significant to the development of the Strand project, the fight over the Santa Fe Building hardly compares to the drawn-out battle over Pier 19 and the explosive drama of the Ufford Building.

The struggle over the relocation of the Mosquito Fleet and the potential development of Pier 19 into a container cargo dock was a much larger fight that pitted many Galvestonians against each other and truly divided the city. In the 1970s, Pier 19 had been home to a fleet of independent fishing boats, nicknamed the Mosquito Fleet, for almost 100 years. Since 1896, articles in the \textit{Galveston Daily News} gave various explanations for the fleet’s nickname, including such reasons as the “numerous little masts of sloops and schooners sticking up into the air at the foot of Twentieth street suggest executed mosquitoes, with their long, thin legs in the air” and “scores of diminutive craft, with their slender masts and rigging outlined in a dingy web against the sky ... congregate and seem to fuss and flutter upon the surface of the dirty water as so

\textsuperscript{11} Peter Brink to Tom Patrick, Austin Insurance Agency, March 12, 1976, Box 7, GHF Admin Records
many giant insects.”\textsuperscript{13} In 1896 these ships brought “pretty nearly everything that Galveston needs and Texas soil can raise,” including building supplies like wood and brick, cash crops such as cotton, rice, and sugar, and fresh seafood, fruits, vegetables, and game.\textsuperscript{14} The \textit{Daily News} reported that over two hundred ships congregated, but that number decreased to approximately one hundred by 1919, and in 1974 the number of boats was only forty-six.\textsuperscript{15} In 1974 most of the Mosquito Fleet boats were independent shrimpers and fishermen who sold their catches to the nearby fish houses and to individuals. Boats paid rent to the Galveston Wharves of thirty-five cents per linear boat foot (with a $10 minimum) per month and fuel and ice were available nearby. In 1974 eight party boats also rented space on Pier 19.\textsuperscript{16} The Galveston Wharves, a city-owned utility since 1940, controlled the island’s wharf and port facilities and was directed by a seven member board of trustees. The City Council appointed six of the seven trustees to three year terms, and the seventh trustee was an ex-officio member from the City Council. The board retained complete financial power of the port’s income and “full and complete control” over the port facilities themselves. Board members could not be recalled by the City Council, and actions taken by the board were not subject to approval. The Board of Trustees for Galveston Wharves retained a very powerful position on the island.\textsuperscript{17}

Discussions about improving the Pier 19 area and constructing a tourist-friendly Fisherman’s Wharf emerged as early as 1958. \textit{Galveston Daily News} columnist Lillian


\textsuperscript{14} “The Mosquito Fleet,” March 2, 1896.


\textsuperscript{17} Alison Cook, “Open Warfare on the Low Seas,” \textit{Texas Business}, January 1977, reprint, Pier 19 Controversy Subject File, GTHC.
Herz reported on a visit to San Francisco by realtor Rea June Flautt and discussed not only Flautt’s positive response to that city’s fisherman’s market but suggested that Galveston promote a similar space at Pier 19 where tourists and Galvestonians could purchase fresh seafood to take home and also enjoy small dishes cooked on the spot.\footnote{Lillian Herz, “This is Galveston,” *Galveston Daily News*, November 16, 1958.}

Several years later Herz used her column to again promote this idea when she reminded readers of “the picturesque shrimping and fishing fleet” and their Pier 19 home where “one can purchase all types of seafood, chat with its crew men, and absorb some of ‘Galvestonia’ and its picturesque surroundings, due to the convenience of its location.”\footnote{Lillian Herz, “This is Galveston: Mosquito Fleet, Old Police Station Inspire Comments,” *Galveston Daily News*, August 26, 1962.}

The Galveston Wharves considered the relocation of the Mosquito Fleet in the early 1960s. The Master Development Plan for the Galveston Wharves prepared for the Board of Trustees in February 1961 recommended that the Mosquito Fleet and the small boat basin at Pier 19 be moved. A further study, specifically prepared in regards to the small boat basin, deemed the facility at Piers 19, 20, and 21 too small, outdated, and in need of repair. In addition, the study raised the argument that the valuable wharf space could be utilized for profitable deep water shipping. The Wharves Board concurred and in its request for a city election to offer $12 million of revenue bonds, $1 million was budgeted to “Develop and build modern facilities for the shrimping and fishing industry of Galveston; the construction of a modern small craft basin.”\footnote{O.L. Selig to Galveston Wharves Board of Trustees, Memo “The Frustrations of Fisherman’s Wharf,” November 28, 1973, Box 6, GHF Admin Records; “$12 Million Galveston Wharves Revenue Bond Issue Endorsed by City Council,” *Galveston Daily News*, May 22, 1962; “Shrimp Fleet Relocation Said ‘Must,’” *Galveston Daily News*, May 22, 1962; Joel Kirkpatrick, “Special Election Today on Bond Issues, Creation of Galveston Beach Park Board,” *Galveston Daily News*, June 30, 1962; Joel Kirkpatrick, “Four Bond Issues Pass, Only Parks Improvement Plan Loses,” *Galveston Daily News*, July 1, 1962.} At the time David Nathan, chairman of the Wharves Board of Trustees, commented on the relocation of the
Mosquito Fleet in the *Galveston Daily News*, stating, "We have pushed the fishing industry around long enough. We are morally obligated to help this group restore their prestige and regain their former position in Galveston."\(^{21}\) The bond election passed, but it was not until June 1963 that the Wharves Board finalized plans for the area. After almost three years of study, the Board announced its intention to not move the Mosquito Fleet and the small boat basin from Pier 19. Instead, on Saturday, June 6, 1964, Port General Manager Charles S. Devoy revealed plans for the construction of a Fisherman’s Wharf project for Piers 19, 20, 21, and 22. Devoy indicated that this development “is expected to be a major Galveston tourist attraction complete with fish houses, restaurants, curio shops, a five-story observation tower, pedestrian promenade deck, banana unloading terminals and possible berthing facilities for the Texas Maritime Academy’s training ship, the Texas Clipper.”\(^{22}\) At the time, members of the board expressed excitement over the development as both an improvement for the fishermen and as a major tourist attraction for Galveston.\(^{23}\) They never completed the project. Wharves’ officials later explained their inaction as the result of a lack of support from shrimpers and businesses.\(^{24}\)

The Wharves Board worked to keep the Port of Galveston competitive with the Port of Houston and other Texas harbors. In 1972 Galveston opened a container terminal and entered the profitable containerized cargo market. With this type of shipping, cargo is loaded into large containers that are then hoisted on and off ships using cranes, as

\(^{21}\) "Shrimp Fleet Relocation Said ‘Must.’"
\(^{23}\) Darst, “New $1.4 Million Fisherman’s Wharf Project Revealed.”
opposed to loading the ships item by item. Galveston was a leader in this type of shipping in the early 1970s and needed the space to expand the port’s capacity.

Galveston also served as a leading port of entry for bananas and received banana ships at a terminal adjacent to Pier 19 four to five times a week. In 1973 the Wharves Board, in connection to improvements related to the banana terminal, revisited the status of Pier 19. No long term decision had been made by the Trustees about the pier, and since the demise of the Fisherman’s Wharf project, it had largely simply continued in operation as a small boat basin with minimal repairs. At the board’s June 26, 1973, meeting, trustees addressed the poor condition of the pier, with the minutes reflecting the opinion of one trustee that its unsafe condition was “the most ridiculous situation he had ever seen.”26 Regardless, based on its rental income from the pier’s tenants, the board could not justify improvements. At the end of October 1973, the Wharves voted to investigate moving the small boats and converting the area into a cargo dock.27

Preservationists in the early 1970s almost always stressed the uniqueness of Galveston’s waterfront when commenting on the national significance of the revitalization of the Strand. The combination of the historical district and the active port with both cargo and fishing boats helped distinguish the area from other preservation projects around the nation. Emily Whiteside recognized the importance of this geographic connection in her work for the American Bicentennial projects, as did architect Thomas M. Price in his 1973 Historical Development Plan for Galveston and

26 Minutes of the Board of Trustees for the Galveston Wharves, June 26, 1973, Box 1, Committee for Pier 19 Records.
Ford, Carson, and Powell in their 1974 Strand Study. Venturi and Rauch articulated this connection well in the Action Plan for the Strand, stating, “its proximity to the port is its particular glory. This is another special asset that distinguishes The Strand from other oldtown centers now being developed. The bustle of the port, the juxtaposition of huge moving freighters against ornamental Victorian buildings just a block away, create a romantic aura unique in American cities.” The Strand’s connection to the waterfront only aided its potential as a successful preservation project and heritage tourism locale, and when threatened by the removal of the Mosquito Fleet, the infill of Pier 19, and the expansion of unsightly container shipping in the adjacent wharf area, GHF felt obligated to preserve this linkage.

The Galveston Wharves’ Board of Trustees recognized that the city council and private Galvestonians would have an opinion on the future of the Mosquito Fleet. In November 1973 the board went to the City Council to review the issue and, after discussing the failure of the 1964 plan, they even agreed to reexamine the feasibility of a Fisherman’s Wharf. The Trustees met in an open special meeting on March 5, 1974, to address the issue further. They contended that their duty was to develop new shipping business and maintained that a new cargo dock was needed. They stipulated that the port could only undertake new development projects when economically feasible and that

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29 Action Plan for The Strand, 8.
“The Wharves should not subsidize the fishing industry, or any part of it.” The Trustees agreed that the facility needed repair and that its condition was unsatisfactory to both the Wharves and the Pier 19 tenants but contended that they wanted to settle on a plan before spending additional funds. Peter Brink addressed the board on behalf of GHF and urged that the Wharves carefully consider the Fisherman’s Wharf project and undertake a comprehensive study to determine a solution that would allow for both the growth of the port and tourism. Although the Trustees were not willing to fund a new study, they concurred with Trustee James E. Yarbough, head of the Wharves operations committee, when he reassured Brink and the other visitors, “We want to do this right. The solution must be one for the good of the total community.” The Trustees agreed to enter discussions with the City Council and the community at large to gage interest in the project. Later that month, the Wharves Board met with the City Council and submitted its position in a written report. In it the Trustees reaffirmed their stance, “the fishing industry in Galveston needs a site for long range growth and development. Tourism should not lead the fishing industry to any predetermined site. Tourism will follow the industry in our opinion.” Although the Wharves Board refused to recommend a

31 Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves Minutes, March 5, 1974, Box 1, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Joel Kirkpatrick, “Public Hearing on Pier 19 Urged,” Galveston Daily News, March 6, 1974.
32 Kirkpatrick, “Public Hearing on Pier 19 Urged”; Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves Minutes, March 5, 1974.
33 Kirkpatrick, “Public Hearing on Pier 19 Urged”; Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves Minutes, March 5, 1974.
34 “Report on the Pier 19 Areas, Port of Galveston,” March 15, 1974, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves Minutes, March 18, 1974, Box 1, Committee for Pier 19 Records.
location for the Mosquito Fleet, whether it should remain at Pier 19 or be moved elsewhere, it contended that the existing site did not allow for expansion.  

Galvestonians already held strong opinions on the future of the site, and many wanted the Mosquito Fleet to stay at Pier 19. Petitions calling for a public vote on the issue circulated in March. Predicting “quite a bit of emotionalism and animosity,” the Galveston Daily News urged both sides to “keep cool heads so that any unnecessary strife can be minimized.” The City Council Chamber filled to capacity at the March 20, 1974, joint meeting with the Wharves Board, and approximately 275 people attended the Council’s public hearing on May 22 at San Jacinto School. Fifty out of the fifty-seven speakers addressing the Council on May 22 opposed any move of the fleet. Shortly after the announcement of the public hearing date, Peter Brink asked Mayor R. A. Apffel for a thirty minute block of time at the start of the hearing to present a prepared statement. The Council had agreed to hear three minute talks by anyone who submitted their name with the order of the speakers drawn randomly, and Apffel denied Brink’s request. GHF encouraged members to attend the hearing and to speak out on the importance of the Mosquito Fleet to the waterfront. At the May 22, 1974, GHF Executive Committee meeting, officers passed a resolution stating the Foundation’s official position:

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35 Report on the Pier 19 Areas, Port of Galveston,” March 15, 1974; Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves Minutes, March 18, 1974.
39 Kirkpatrick, “Mosquito Fleet Move Opposed 5 to 1”; Peter Brink to R. A. Apffel, April 16, 1975, Box 3, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to GHF Members, May 16, 1976, Box 3, GHF Admin Records.
Resolved, that development of a tourist-oriented fisherman’s wharf completed in a waterfront area between 19th and 25th street is of crucial importance to the revitalization of The Strand and downtown Galveston. The development of a fisherman’s wharf complex is in the best long-term interest of Galveston as a whole, and will preserve and enhance a unique and important part of Galveston life. The Galveston Historical Foundation stands ready to cooperate fully with all Galveston organizations in attempting to accomplish this goal.\textsuperscript{40}

GHF President Ross read the statement at the May 23 hearing, and several other GHF members including past leaders Anne Amons Brindley and Sally Wallace spoke in favor of the keeping the fleet at Pier 19.\textsuperscript{41}

On the same day as the public hearing, the City Council heard the results of a study on the situation by the Corpus Christi firm of Hartland Bartholomew and Associates. The study recommended that Pier 19 continue to be the home of the Mosquito Fleet if a Fisherman’s Wharf project could be developed. If not, the study recommended its use as a cargo dock and that the Wharves construct a new small boat basin for the Mosquito Fleet using city funds if necessary.\textsuperscript{42} The City Council took action based on the public hearing and the Batholomew report. They voted to form a Pier 19 Study Committee composed of representatives from all interested community groups who would make a recommendation to the Council. Dale Ware, president of the Galveston Chamber of Commerce, was appointed chairman and Evangeline Wharton was selected to represent GHF. The Council appointed Wharves Trustees Tramonte and Yarbrough to

\textsuperscript{40} GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 22, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.
\textsuperscript{41} Kirkpatrick, “Mosquito Fleet Move Opposed 5 to 1.”
The committee met weekly over the summer and presented their unanimous resolution to the City Council on August 29. They recommended: “That the Mosquito Fleet, the Party Boats and processing houses should remain at Piers 19 and 20 until an adequate alternate facility in the City of Galveston is properly planned, developed and fully ready for occupancy” and “That the idea of a Fisherman’s Wharf complex at Pier 9 is worthy of thorough investigation as an alternative site for the Pier 19 and 20 tenants.” These recommendations advocated keeping the Mosquito Fleet in the general vicinity of the Strand — only in a location east of its original site — and supported the construction of a Fisherman’s Wharf complex that would aid tourism. The committee’s plan was inspired by Tramonte and Yarbrough and also included the recommendation that an observation deck or tower be constructed in the vicinity of Pier 20 to 25 so tourists could have a view of the port’s activities. The City Council agreed to pass their Study Committee’s report to the Wharves Trustees with the instructions to scrutinize the report “using every available community resource.”

The Wharves board worked into 1975 on finding a solution to the Mosquito Fleet issue; however, by mid-September 1975 it became publicly obvious that the Fisherman’s Wharf solution was not feasible at Pier 9 or the nearby Pier 7. The move of the Mosquito Fleet from Pier 19 included not only the shrimpers and fishermen but party boats, fish houses, and support facilities such as fuel and ice suppliers. Although initial discussions

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with Mrs. Robert E. Smith, owner of property near Pier 7, had been positive, the Wharves Board could not finalize a deal to secure the property, and without it, the site did not have enough land for the development. The shrimpers themselves did not like the proposed location at Pier 9 because of its exposure to rough water and high traffic. Furthermore, Wharves officials quoted potential rental rates of $55 to $65 per boat for Pier 9, approximately $40 more than at Pier 19. The Wharves Board maintained the position that they needed Pier 19 for a cargo dock and that the Mosquito Fleet would have to move.\textsuperscript{46}

In August 1975 Wharves officials went to the shrimpers and the Texas Bay and Gulf Fisherman’s Association with two choices, Pier 9 or Pelican Island, a small island on the north shore of the Galveston Ship Channel. Pelican Island was far removed from any tourist map and did not have the fish houses or facilities needed for the Mosquito Fleet. Regardless, many of the shrimpers, feeling they had no other option, agreed to a new dock at Pelican Island.\textsuperscript{47} The Wharves Board of Trustees filed its permit request for the construction with the U.S. Corps of Engineers September 16, and at the regular monthly meeting on September 30, 1975, Trustees voted to inform the City Council about their plan to relocate the tenants of Pier 19 and their intention to select Texas Gulf Coast Construction Company’s $170,500 construction bid.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves Minutes, April 8, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Executive Session of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves, May 27, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Executive Session of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves, September 17, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Cook, “Open Warfare on the Low Seas”; Port of Galveston News Release, December 3, 1975, Box 3, Committee for Pier 19 Records.

\textsuperscript{47} Cook, “Open Warfare on the Low Seas.”

\textsuperscript{48} Press Release, Port of Galveston, December 3, 1975; Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves Minutes, September 30, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19; Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of trustees of the Galveston Wharves, November 14, 1975, Box 3, Committee for Pier 19.
Initially, the Galveston City Council welcomed the plans presented by the Wharves Board to construct a new small boat basin on Pelican Island for the Mosquito Fleet and the utilization of the Pier 19 space as a new cargo dock. They believed that this relocation would be good for the city's growth and development. But Ralph Wood, a newcomer to Galveston, spearheaded a growing movement to stop the relocation. In addition to speaking at meetings of the Wharves Board, he placed advertisements in the newspaper urging "Lay Off the Mosquito Fleet," and he pushed his opinions on the situation onto Galveston leaders.\(^49\) In early November, Wood appeared at the GHF Steering Committee Meeting to urge GHF to oppose the decision made by the Wharves Board to move the fleet. The Foundation's leadership agreed to continued discussion at their scheduled November 13 board meeting.\(^50\)

The City Council also met on November 13, 1975. In the discussion regarding the Pier 19 area, Mayor Apffel stated that the city believed that the situation had been resolved and "everyone is satisfied with the new facilities."\(^51\) It was the Council's position that all had been decided and the Wharves Board would continue on with their plans, but further discussion indicated that many important parties felt otherwise. Wood presented a petition signed by over 1,300 Galvestonians opposed to the move of the Mosquito Fleet and asked the Council to stop the Wharves. Caroline Columbo, wife of

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\(^{49}\) Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves, September 30, 1975; "Lay Off the Mosquito Fleet!" Advertisement, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19; "Lay Off the Mosquito Fleet! An Open Letter," Advertisement, Box 1, Galveston Historical Foundation Records MS#90-0025 (hereafter cited as GHF Records), GTHC; Cook, "Open Warfare on the Low Seas"; Ralph Wood to the City Council, September 4, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Ralph Wood to Robert Nesbitt, Director of Communications, Port of Galveston, September 4, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Ralph Wood to Robert Shattuck, City Attorney, October 14, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records.

\(^{50}\) GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, November 6, 1975, Box 1, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Ralph Wood, Handwritten Notes, November 1975, Box 1, Committee for Pier 19 Records.

\(^{51}\) Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council, City of Galveston, November 13, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records.
a shrimper and member of the Pier 19 Study Committee, addressed the Council informing it that none of the recommendations of the Committee had been implemented into the Wharves proposal. Instead, she revealed, the Wharves plan offered fewer boat slips, no slips for partyboats, and no room for processing plants, fish houses, restaurants, and parking. Columbo further stated that “the shrimpers have put good faith with the company but none was received in return” and that the fishermen would not support the move to Pelican Island.52 G.W. McNeir, secretary of the Texas Bay and Gulf Fisherman’s Association, echoed Colombo’s sentiments and suggested that the Wharves use the $200,000 it intended to use on the construction of the Pelican Island facility on repairs and/or improvements to Pier 19. GHF President Lamar Ross also addressed the Council, reminding it that GHF supported the recommendations of the Pier 19 Study Committee and informing it that Foundation leaders would meet that evening to discuss an official position on the situation. The City Council did not make any decisions on November 13 and called a special meeting of the Wharves Board for the following day.53

GHF’s Board of Directors met later that evening with Ralph Wood and discussed the Foundation’s position on Pier 19. GHF had invited the Wharves Board to send a representative; however, the Wharves declined. The Board unanimously agreed (with one abstention) “to support by all legitimate means retention of the Mosquito Fleet at its traditional berthing-place Pier 19.”54 The Foundation based its position on the decision by the members of the Texas Bay and Gulf Fisherman’s Association to reject the Pelican

52 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council, November 13, 1975, Box 2, Committee for Pier 19 Records.
53 Ibid.
54 GHF Press Release, “Statement Regarding the Mosquito Fleet by M. L. Ross, President Galveston Historical Foundation,” November 19, 1975, Box 1, Committee for Pier 19 Records; Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves, November 14, 1975, Box 3, Committee for Pier 19 Records.
Island leases and on the decision by the Wharves to not follow the Pier 19 Study Committee's recommendations. Further, GHF leaders agreed to oppose any permits filed with the Corps of Engineers that involved Pier 19 and to support Wood's "Lay Off the Mosquito Fleet" petition.55

Brink presented the decisions of the GHF Board of Directors to the Wharves Board of Trustees the following day, November 14, 1975. The usual suspects, including Wood, McNeir, Colombo, and Reita Fugger, chair of the Galveston County Historical Commission, addressed the Wharves Board stressing their opposition to the removal of the Mosquito Fleet. The Trustees listened and acknowledged that changing Pier 19 would not be a popular decision. They defended their decision on the basis that they had attempted compromise but stressed their primary responsibility to be the operation of the Port of Galveston as a successful profitable venture. Furthermore, chairman Sam Tramonte stated "that he did not appreciate being led to believe that the facility would be utilized and was acceptable and then at the 'ninth' hour someone figures they have a last ditch chance to stop the Board's action." He continued on stating that he was "almost inclined to . . . request a motion to give 30-days notice to the tenants to vacate Pier 19 and simply not build another facility for the shrimp fleet. However, he did not feel this would be in the best interest of the City of Galveston or the shrimpers."56 After pressing the shrimper's representative, McNeir, on the question of whether the move to Pelican Island had ever been acceptable to the majority of the fishermen and about the shrimpers' primary objection that the plans for the new small boat basin did not include the party

55 GHF Press Release, "Statement Regarding the Mosquito Fleet by M. L. Ross, President Galveston Historical Foundation," November 19, 1975; Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves, November 14, 1975; M. L. Ross and Peter Brink to Mayor R. A. Apfel, November 17, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records.
56 Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves, November 14, 1975.
boats, the fish houses, and fuel stations, the Board concluded that a plan for the relocation could still be negotiated "with patience and compromise." The Wharves Board decided to move forward with the plans and officially approved the bid of Texas Gulf Construction Company to build the small boat basin on Pelican Island. Construction would begin within thirty to forty-five days with the facility opening sometime in February.

Disappointed but not surprised by the Wharves action, GHF embarked on its campaign to stop the relocation. GHF leaders recognized that their position on the Pier 19 issue might impact their somewhat positive relations with the City of Galveston, particularly the City Council. GHF also recognized that this fight could result in the loss of funding and the general support of key members of the Galveston community. Debate over Pier 19 had the power to negatively affect the development of the Strand project, other preservation projects in the city, and the future of GHF. Despite these possible consequences, preservation leaders believed strongly "that retention of the fleet at Pier 19 is in the long-term best interest of Galveston as a whole" and "that retention of the fleet is supported overwhelmingly by our community." President Ross and Executive Director Brink wrote Mayor Apffel on November 17 to reassure the City Council that although GHF would "support by all legitimate means the retention of the fleet at Pier 19," the Foundation "will not engage in acrimonious or destructive tactics" nor will any city, state, or federal funds be used in the Pier 19 campaign.

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57 Ibid.
60 M. L. Ross and Peter Brink to Mayor R. A. Apfel, November 17, 1975.
GHF utilized several traditional methods in their initial campaign. It reached out to the Chamber of Commerce and other Galveston cultural groups, including the Cultural Arts Council, the Galveston Art League, and the Friends of the Rosenberg Library, asking them to “join us in this effort to retain this economically and aesthetically important part of our community at an appropriate place accessible to the public” and to sign Ralph Wood’s petition.  

It issued numerous press releases detailing its position, the history of the issue and the Mosquito Fleet, and the actions of the Wharves Board. The Foundation partnered with the Texas Bay and Gulf Fishermen’s Association and contracted Christopher J. Brown and Associates of Houston to prepare a report on the potential consequences of moving the shrimpers to Pelican Island. The report, released in late November 1975, estimated that the displacement of the Pier 19 fishermen and supporting businesses could translate into a $2.45 to $2.9 million loss in gross revenue. The Galveston economy would see an annual loss of payroll and net income somewhere between $855,000 and $585,000. The report supported GHF’s claims that to move the

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61 M. L. Ross to Tom Wisenheart, November 19, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records; M. L. Ross to Caroline Stiles, President Galveston County Cultural Arts Council, November 19, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records; M.L. Ross to Dorothy Muecke, President of Friends of Rosenberg Library, November 19, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records; M.L. Ross to Marian Woods, President Galveston Art League, November 19, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records.

Fleet would negatively impact the economy; however, it failed to address any economic gain from the development of the new cargo dock.\textsuperscript{63}

GHF also mobilized its cadre of volunteers and sent them to the streets to collect signatures on the petition originally circulated by Wood. This petition called for the use of the Pier 19 and 22 areas by the shrimp and fishing industry, that these areas be maintained properly, and that these areas be accessible to the public. Citing the right of citizens to petition their government and “Article IV of the Galveston City Charter which provides for the power of direct legislation by the people of the City by initiative,” GHF hoped the City Council (and possibly the Wharves Board) would listen to the people of Galveston who did not want the fleet moved.\textsuperscript{64} Wood, Brink, and others presented the petition with 10,229 signatures from Galveston residents and 666 non-Galvestonians to the City Secretary on Monday, December 1, 1975. The signatures were officially presented to the City Council at their regular meeting, four days later. The Council acknowledged that they believed the ten thousand Galvestonians who signed the petition should be heard, but the question remained whether or not the Council had any power over the Wharves Board of Trustees. They agreed to consult with the city attorney on the petition request and to discuss it the following week.\textsuperscript{65}

The Wharves Board responded with a December 9, 1975, press conference in which they defended their decision to move the small boat basin to Pelican Island and convert the Pier 19 area into a cargo berth. C.S. Devoy, executive director of the


\textsuperscript{64} GHF Press Release, “Ten Thousands Signatures for the Shrimp Fleet Submitted to the City”; “Initiative Petition,” Box 1, Committee for Pier 19 Records.

Wharves Board, outlined the reasons Pier 19 must be transformed into a cargo dock and fielded questions with Sam Tramonte for an hour. The board continued to pursue their primary argument, that "the best thing for the economy of Galveston would be a diversified open cargo dock in an area that is now generating less than $20,000 in revenue a year." Furthermore, they maintained that the shrimpers would continue to be a tourist attraction at their much improved facility on Pelican Island. Tramonte also stated his opinion that this issue had "unnecessarily polarized citizens of Galveston" and that "a lot of signatures on the 10,000 signature petitions presented to the city were there because of emotion and ignorance of those facts." Brink and GHF responded to the press conference the same day and called for a referendum on the issue.

The City Council continued the discussion on December 11, 1975. City Attorney Bob Shattuck reported on his legal opinion first, concluding the Wharves Board maintained full control over the use of Pier 19, that the City Council held no authority over the actions of the board, and that the Council did not have the power to take action on the Pier 19 petition. In total, twenty-one Galvestonians spoke against relocating the Mosquito Fleet, and only two spoke in support of the Wharves plan. Prior to the meeting, GHF submitted a list of sixteen people who wished to address the Council on Pier 19 and coordinated with their speakers as to order and relevance. Despite the findings of the city attorney, the majority of the speakers continued to demand a

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67 Ibid.
69 GHF to Patsy Poole, City Secretary, November 9, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records; GHF to R.A. Apffel, Mayor, December 11, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records; GHF to December 11 City Council Speakers, December 13, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records; Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Council of the City of Galveston, December 11, 1975, Box 3, Committee for Pier 19 Records.
referendum on the issue, even if the vote was not legally binding. Members of the City Council understood that Pier 19 was an emotional issue and that thousands of Galvestonians, including some of the city’s most vocal citizens, felt strongly that the shrimpers should not leave. Mayor Pro-Tem Doug McLeod moved that the Council order a public referendum in thirty days on the issue. Although the outcome could not be legally binding for the Wharves Board, McLeod reasoned, “if the people do vote for the Pier 19 fleet to stay, surely the Wharves would listen and adhere to that decision.” Not all Council members agreed with McLeod. Mayor Apffel and Councilman Jo Termini opposed the election due to its cost and what they viewed as a waste of taxpayer dollars. After over two hours of discussion, the Council voted down the referendum (4-3) and closed the issue.\textsuperscript{71}

Although the City Council declared the situation out of its hands and the Wharves Board continued to make plans for the Pelican Island site, Galvestonians committed to keeping the Mosquito Fleet at Pier 19 continued their fight. Supporters circulated a second petition in early January 1976 calling for a referendum to “amend certain provisions of the city charter which would allow the citizens of Galveston to dedicate Piers 18, 19, 20 and 21 to be used rented or leased exclusively as boat slips, berths or docks for shrimp boats, party boats, fishing boats, fruit produce boats, … and all other activities in the area in 1975.”\textsuperscript{72} Shrimper Salvatore Areidiacono, shrimp boat owner Alfio Valastro, fish house operator Charles R. Hill, and party boat/charter fishing boat operators Fred E. Graef and John H. Williams, Jr., retained attorney Robert M. Moore

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
and filed a lawsuit in 122nd District Court against the City of Galveston and the Galveston Wharves that sought to prevent the move of the Mosquito Fleet and stop construction on the small boat basin at Pelican Island. The lawsuit contended that the petitioners wanted only to allow the citizens of Galveston the opportunity to vote on the issue and to make the results of the referendum binding on the Wharves Board. According to the city charter, an election to amend the charter could not be called until April 1977. The petitioners used the argument that the Pier 19 area was a registered historical site and named as such by the Texas Historical Commission and the National Historical Register. To move the Mosquito Fleet would change the site’s historical character and prevent preservationists from possibly receiving matching funds.\(^{73}\) In early February, at a hearing before the judge, West Gulf Maritime Association and the Galveston Local Union of International Longshoremen’s Association joined the lawsuit as intervenors for the defendant.\(^{74}\) The judge heard legal arguments March 2 and 3, 1976, and dismissed the case on the second day of the hearing. Moore appealed the case to the 14th Court of Civil Appeals in Houston.\(^{75}\)

With the filing of the lawsuit, leaders of the Galveston Historical Foundation removed the non-profit from the frontlines of the fight. It continued to support the retention of the Mosquito Fleet at its location at Pier 19 but needed to protect its reputation and relationship with city officials and influential citizens. In January 1976 after the lawsuit was first filed, Brink wrote to the members of the City Council reassuring them that GHF was not involved in the new petition calling for a referendum


to change the city charter nor any legal action.\textsuperscript{76} At the February 9, 1976, GHF executive board meeting, Foundation leaders agreed to reaffirm their support for the retention of the Mosquito Fleet at Pier 19 but they officially declined to become involved in the lawsuit against the city and the Wharves Board. GHF would state its position if subpoenaed but would not enter as an intervenor nor would it submit supporting statements.\textsuperscript{77}

The Wharves Board did not allow the filing of the lawsuit to stop its plans for Pelican Island and Pier 19. Construction on the small boat basin continued, and the board sent registered letters to all Pier 19 tenants on February 13 notifying them that they had thirty days to enter into lease negotiations for the Pelican Island site or to make other arrangements. Attorney Robert Moore advised his clients to do nothing. The Wharves completed construction on the new 48-slip facility in early April, and it mailed formal eviction notices notifying Pier 19 shrimpers, fishermen, party boat operators, and fish house owners they must vacate within thirty days.\textsuperscript{78} The Wharves Board also continued to move forward with the plans to convert the Pier 19 area into a cargo dock, filing an application for a permit with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on March 24 to fill in the area. Per Corps of Engineers regulations, the department issued public notice of the application and opened the application to comments from interested parties. GHF’s Executive Committee received notice and agreed to file “a letter of protest to the permit request based on historical and cultural factors, as well as the impact on The Strand restoration and tourism in the city.”\textsuperscript{79} Others dedicated to the Pier 19 fight went further.

\textsuperscript{76} Peter Brink to Doug McLeod, January 17, 1976, Box 6, GHF Admin Records.
\textsuperscript{77} GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 9, 1976, Box 7, GHF Admin Records.
\textsuperscript{79} GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 13, 1976, Box 7, GHF Admin Records; Joel Kirkpatrick, “Pier 19 Restraining Order Issued,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, April 7, 1976.
With the lawsuit brought by the five Pier 19 tenants on appeal and the Wharves Board pursuing the eviction of the Pier 19 tenants and permit applications to fill in the area, a second group of Galvestonians filed suit against the Galveston Wharves and the City of Galveston. On April 6, 1976, Reita Fugger, on behalf of the Galveston County Historical Commission, Edna Fuller, a member of the City Council, Ralph B. Wood, and Bill H. Fullen, filed for a restraining order and temporary injunction. Attorney Robert Moore handled this case as well. The lawsuit alleged “the city charter violates the general laws of Texas in delegating budgetary power and the right to take property to the Galveston Wharves” and that the Wharves Board “violated the Texas Open Meeting Act in executive sessions.” District Judge Donald Markle agreed to a temporary restraining order that prevented the City of Galveston and the Galveston Wharves Board from evicting the Pier 19 tenants and from making plans, spending money, or holding any non-public meetings related to the development of the historic area. The petitioners’ true intention was simply to preserve a historic site valuable to Galveston’s economy. The Wharves Board contended that Pier 19 was not a historic site, and Ben Powel, attorney for the board, stated to the *Galveston Daily News*, “There’s not a shrimp boat down there that is historic. The tenants are not a historic site.”

The temporary injunction hearing against the City and the Wharves began April 14, 1976. After seventeen days of testimony, during which the temporary restraining order remained under effect, Judge Donald Markle ruled in favor of Fugger, Fuller, Fullen, and Wood, and issued the temporary injunction that halted all Wharves Board and City activity in the Pier 19 area on May 19. *Daily News* writer Joel Kirkpatrick

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80 Kirkpatrick, “Pier 19 Restraining Order Issued.”
81 Ibid.
commented, "There have been capital murder cases in Galveston County that were tried in less time." The lawsuits (and the appeals) cost the city time and money. They also threatened to halt the issuance of bonds to fund the construction of a new $58 million grain elevator on Pelican Island. The Wharves Board initially sought to diffuse the lawsuit soon after the testimony began in mid-April. On April 19, 1976, the Wharves Board of Trustees voted unanimously to withdraw both their permit application with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to fill in the Pier 19 area and the eviction notices mailed to the tenants. Although their action did not halt the lawsuit, the Wharves Board and the plaintiffs continued negotiations outside of the courtroom. Discussions stepped up after the May 19 granting of the temporary injunction against the Wharves and a June 23 ruling by the 14th Court of Appeals that reversed the decision in the first lawsuit. Although the Wharves Board vowed to appeal both cases, the lawsuits began to hinder Wharf business. In late July the city’s bond attorney advised the City Council and the Wharves Board that the city might not be able to issue revenue bonds to fund the construction of a new grain elevator. Negotiations between the board and those involved with the lawsuits continued throughout the summer.


By late September, the Wharves Board of Trustees and the plaintiffs of both lawsuits agreed to a settlement that ended the legal action over Pier 19. The plaintiffs would drop their lawsuits and the Wharves Board agreed to a binding public election on the future use of the Pier 19 area to be held January 15, 1977. The referendum would seek to amend the city charter so that it would specify that the disputed area could be dedicated exclusively to small boats, fish houses, and related businesses. If passed, the Wharves Board would offer long term leases to interested parties and a historical marker for the area would be erected. If the amendment failed, the Mosquito Fleet, party boats, and the fish houses would be given six months to vacate the area and the board could proceed with its plan for a cargo dock. The Galveston City Council agreed to the settlement and officially called for the special election at their October 21, 1976 meeting.84

The Galveston Wharves Board and preservationists interested in preserving Pier 19 intensified their publicity efforts as the election neared. Preservationists organized the Committee for Pier 19 with UTMB doctor Patricia A. Buffler as chair. Ralph Wood served as canvassing coordinator and attorney Bob Moore as speakers forum chair. Board supporters formed the Support Your Port Committee chaired by realtor and former

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Wharves Board of Trustees chairman, Ted A. Waterman, Sr. The Committee for Pier 19 continued to advocate the historical value of the Pier 19 area, the importance of the Strand redevelopment, and the value of tourism to the Galveston economy. The Support Your Port Committee answered by stating that the election simply had to do with the economic future of Galveston and that the growth of the Port would be threatened should the charter amendment pass. The bitter battle that had developed over the past several years was coming to a climax.

GHF supporters belonged to both sides, and when the fight over Pier 19 became a legal one, with the filing of the first lawsuit, the Foundation removed itself. At that time, the Board of Directors agreed to reiterate its position that the Mosquito Fleet should not be moved from Pier 19 but agreed not to take any legal action. After the court cases were settled and the city charter election had been agreed to, the GHF Board of Directors met at a special November 4, 1976, meeting to revisit its position. The board heard from Wharves Board director, Charles S. Devoy, and Pier 19 attorney and supporter, Robert M. Moore. Following a question and answer period and heated discussion among the GHF board, the members voted with fourteen in favor and twelve opposed to adopt a new resolution on Pier 19. It read:

The Board of Directors, notes the impending election scheduled for January 15, 1977, concerning an amendment

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to the charter of the City of Galveston which would restrict the authority of the City Council and the Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves with respect to the utilization of the Pier 19 and

Refers to the general philosophy underlying the statement of position issued by the Board of Directors on December 18, 1975, following the submission of the referendum petition obtained with the support of the GHF which stated in part:

Nor does GHF believe that the animosities which would be incurred by GHF undertaking any legal action attempting to force a referendum are justified. ***

Galvestonians can disagree on an important issue such as Pier 19, discuss their disagreement constructively and still remain friends working together on the myriad of other matters in our community.

After careful consideration, the Board concludes that the interests of the Foundation and the fulfillment of the function it was established to perform will best be served by utilization of its assets and resources in the furtherance of the several projects which are the direct responsibility of the Foundation, such as Ashton Villa, the development of the Strand, the Samuel May Williams' House, the ELISSA Project, and others equally important.

Therefore, the Board of Directors resolves that, having stated its position as respects Pier 19, it should refrain any further activity as an organization or the utilization of any of its resources in connection with the forthcoming election on the charter amendment. However, the Board whole heartedly encourages all of its members, as well as all of the other citizens of Galveston, to familiarize themselves with the issues involved, to participate in the election and to cast their votes in that matter which each individual feels will be in the best overall future interest of this community.87

The new resolution failed to acknowledge GHF’s past position that favored the retention of the Mosquito Fleet at Pier 19. It passed by only two votes, and four of those “for”

87 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, November 4, 1976, Box 9, GHF Admin Records.
votes were made by proxy. The proxy votes triggered another dispute within the board as several members questioned the legality of the vote. At the GHF Executive Committee meeting on November 11, 1976, GHF’s legal council Jim Foutch expressed his opinion that GHF bylaws did not allow for proxy votes and the resolution could be considered void. President Elbert Whorton called for another meeting of the Board of Directors to address the resolution and the Pier 19 issue.88

The Board of Directors met again on November 22, 1976 and accepted Foutch’s legal decision on the legitimacy of the November 4 resolution. The board refused to consider a revised version of the November 4 resolution and after much discussion, considered a resolution drafted by “staff” (Brink), that was distributed to the Board of Directors along with the meeting announcement. At the end of the meeting, an adopted form of this resolution passed with a vote of 18 to 14. The Board of Directors agreed that GHF would not use its funds on the Pier 19 issue but would do its best to provide accurate information when asked. Most importantly to GHF’s Pier 19 supporters was the reiteration that GHF supported the retention of the Mosquito Fleet at their present location. The full text of the resolution read:

1. In accordance with the Galveston Historical Foundation’s stated organization purpose, the Historical Foundation reaffirms its position that the Mosquito Fleet, fish houses, and party boats should remain at Pier 19. This reaffirmation is consistent with positions adopted by the historical Foundation on May 22, 1974, on November 13, 1975, and on December 18, 1975.

2. The Galveston Historical Foundation will spend no Historical Foundation funds or other resources on the Pier 19 issue, because the Historical Foundation believes its

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88 Byran F. Williams to Peter Brink, November 5, 1976, Box 9, GHF Admin Records; Joel Kirkpatrick, “The Morning Cup: GHF’s Pier 19 Vote to Be Reviewed,” Galveston Daily News, November 8, 1976; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, November 11, 1976, Box 9, GHF Admin Records.
resources are better directed to on-going preservation and restoration undertakings such as Ashton Villa, The Strand, ELISSA, the Samuel May Williams House, St. Joseph's Church, residential historical areas, and Programs, rather than to issues which have become highly political in nature.

3. The Historical Foundation urges its members to give special attention to the historical aspects of the Pier 19 issue, to evaluate carefully all sides of the issue, and to vote as their conscience directs in the forthcoming referendum.

4. The Historical Foundation, notwithstanding paragraph 2 above, shall use its best efforts to provide factual information to all sides about the Pier 19 issue regarding the history of Pier 19, its relation to other historical areas, its potential as a fisherman's wharf, and related aspects. The Historical Foundation will attempt to do this because of its sincere belief that the Pier 19 issue should be decided on the basis of factual information, and because the Historical Foundation believes it can make a contribution in that respect.89

GHF’s Board of Directors walked a fine line in pleasing (or even simply not offending) its leaders, its membership, and its Galveston city partners. Brink later described the Pier 19 issue as a "divisive and bitter" fight within the board.90 In 1977 he acknowledged to Texas Business reporter Alison Cook, "The Pier 19 fight has really hurt our relations with City Council. We paid a real price by going into the fight that strongly."91 GHF cautiously backed away from the fight over the Mosquito Fleet as it increasingly threatened the Foundation’s overall success. However, individual GHF supporters continued to rally voters for both sides.

As the election neared, the opposing factions worked to raise awareness for their positions and sought the support of established Galveston groups. The League of Women

90 Peter Brink, interview by Robert Jones, December 19, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC.
91 Cook, "Open Warfare on the Low Seas."
Voters prepared a fact sheet with statements from both committees, and the *Galveston Daily News* published updated statements days before the election. Although the Rotary Club encouraged members to make up their own minds on the issue, they invited the public to an educational forum on the referendum. The Chamber of Commerce’s Board of Directors came out in support of the Wharves Board as did the Galveston Board of Realtors, the Galveston Cotton Exchange and Board of Trade, and the local branches of the National Maritime Union, the West Gulf Maritime Association, the International Longshoremen Association, and the AFI-CLO. In the end, even the *Galveston Daily News* urged islanders in a front page editorial to vote against changing the city charter, stating “Clear thinking, sound judgment and proper perspective are needed. Review the true issues. Don’t be blinded by the smoke screen of nostalgia. . . . The historic significance of the shrimp fleet with be unaffected by the outcome of tomorrow’s election. But the future of the Port of Galveston will be adversely affected if the charter change is approved.” Despite the many public declarations of support for the Wharves Board, the Committee for Pier 19 did in fact have plenty of followers. The *Daily News* even acknowledged in their editorial opposing it, the high probability that the amendment would pass. The grassroots organizing and publicity machine of the Committee for Pier

96 Ibid.
19 won over thousands of individual citizens, many of whom wrote letters to the editor of
the *Daily News* and some of whom even placed paid advertisements.\(^97\)

Galvestonians came out in force to vote in the January 15, 1977, Pier 19 election, and they cast over 9,500 votes — a larger number of voters than voted in the recent city council election. The City Charter amendment passed with almost a 2 to 1 margin in what the Committee for Pier 19 called “a great victory for the people of Galveston.”\(^98\) Charles S. Devoy admitted the defeat of the Wharves Board in his statement to the *Daily News* and commented that the Pier 19 supporters “outgunned, outwitted and out financed” the Port supporters.\(^99\) Despite a clear electoral victory, the struggle to save Pier 19 was not yet over. Negotiations between the tenants and the Galveston Wharves Board lasted a full year. Shrimpers finally signed five-year leases at a rate of $1 per-foot in late March 1978. Party Boat owners also agreed to five-year leases at a rate of $1.25 per foot and the two fish houses, Hill’s and Sampson & Son Fish Market, accepted twenty year leases at a rate of roughly $9,000 annually.\(^100\) In addition, Galvestonians who rallied


\(^99\) Ibid.

around Pier 19 were now faced with planning for the area’s future — the Pier 19 area, historic it may have been, was in disrepair and in desperate need of improvement.

Following the election, the Committee for Pier 19 formed a development committee to spearhead the renewal of the area and work with the tenants, the Wharves Board, and the City Council. The goal was not to undertake the work itself but to coordinate the master plan, raise funds for capital improvements, and assist the tenants. Committee members Reita Fugger, Bob Alderdice, Bill Fullen, and Hermann Rudenberg asked GHF to appoint a representative, and Peter Brink joined the small committee. 101 In April 1977 the committee received a matching grant of $5,000 from the Texas Historical Commission to hire a professional planner-architect. GHF agreed to serve as the umbrella organization for the raising of additional funds. 102 As the lease negotiations dragged on, the Development Committee secured $4,100 in HUD Community Development funds from the City Council, $500 from the Wharves, and $1,200 from Pier 19 tenants. In February 1978 it announced the hiring of the San Antonio firm of Ford, Powell, and Carson, and after working closely with all Pier 19 interests, the firm presented a new Master Plan for Pier 19 to the Wharves Board of Trustees, the City Council, and the public in late July. 103

The City and the Wharves Board had produced many plans for Pier 19 in the past, but when Ford, Powell, and Carson revealed this Master Plan in 1978, it seemed that

102 Peter Brink and Reita Fugger to Joe Williams, Texas Historical Commission, March 25, 1977, Box 10, GHF Admin Records; “Pier 19 Committee Receives Grant,” Galveston Daily News, April 10, 1977; GHF Press Release, “$5,000 Planning Grant Announced for Pier 19,” GHF Archives; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 7, 1977, GHF Archives.
Galveston would finally get its Fisherman’s Wharf. The Master Plan acknowledged the ultimate goals of the study were to “address the Pier 19 situation realistically rather than attempt to create an ‘ideal’ small craft harbor or fisherman’s wharf complex” and to “develop a program of achievable revitalization.”104 As with the plans for The Strand, this document provided recommendations on the use, infrastructure, access, and improvements that promoted the general atmosphere of the Pier 19 area as both a working ship berth and a tourist attraction. Specifically, the plan called for functional improvements like upgrading basic utilities and dredging the slip as well as tourist-oriented projects such as the construction of a visible, well-marked entrance at 20th Street and an observation tower and elevated walkway where visitors could watch the activities along the wharf without disturbing workers. It also made suggestions intended for individual tenants, including improved signage and even the addition of a seafood restaurant to a fish house. Supporters found the plan workable and believed the improvements to be within reason financially. Committee chair Fugger reported at the time, that funding was available for many of the improvements and that the committee intended on applying for the money following the Master Plan’s approval by the City Council and Galveston Wharves.105 Over two years later, however, little progress on implanting the suggested improvements had been made. Hill’s Fish and Oyster Co. added a three level restaurant but, according to a Daily News reporter in 1980, “The area still looks much as it did in 1977.”106 Although preservationists prevented both the moving of the Mosquito Fleet to Pelican Island and the construction of a new cargo dock

104 Ford, Powell & Carson, Pier 19: A Master Plan Study for the City of Galveston, the Texas Historical Commission, The Pier 19 Development Committee, June 1978, University of Houston Library.
at Pier 19, the development of a cohesive Fisherman’s Wharf remained outside their grasp.

The saga of Pier 19 and the Mosquito Fleet serves as another example of Galvestonians rallying to save what they considered an important part of their history. It demonstrates the persistence and dedication of those committed to a future rooted in the past. In 1973 when the Wharves Board revisited discussions about the future of the small boat basin at Pier 19 and in 1974 when the controversy first heated up, Galveston was at a critical time in its development as a twentieth century city. It was a time when citizens and their government could decide to move forward with preservation, “save” their heritage, and market it to the tourist — or they could forgo their past, perhaps move forward in industry, and gamble on a decaying market. Preservationists made their decision and were fighting to preserve the Strand’s historic architectural treasures. They exploited their contacts in government and in the non-profit community to help bring attention and funds to Galveston. On the island, these preservationists mobilized around the Galveston Historical Foundation and the strong organizational structure that developed after the arrival of Peter Brink in 1973. The credibility that GHF built throughout is early history and assisted in its transformation into a modern historic preservation institution was challenged by the fight over Pier 19. The struggle tested the city’s tolerance for historical destruction for economic benefit, and it tested the strength of GHF. Ultimately the Mosquito Fleet was not forced to leave, but the cost was high for the people of Galveston and even for GHF. GHF recognized the divisiveness of the fight and backed down as members disagreed. When it became apparent that this fight could truly divide the membership in a way that threatened the organization’s ability to
successfully achieve their broader preservation goals, leaders removed themselves from the front lines. Yes, they supported the Mosquito Fleet and the development of the pier as a Fisherman's Wharf project, but GHF could not let this battle destroy the social and political power it had cultivated nor could it let it overturn their successful war on decay and demolition. Although Brink served on the Development Committee for Pier 19, it was not a Foundation project and it really was not in the Board's best interest to become overly involved. It is curious to wonder, however, if more of the Master Plan's improvements would have been implemented had GHF taken charge.

By the summer of 1977, Galveston had survived the battle over the Pier 19 controversy and the struggle to save the Santa Fe Building. The Strand Project was in full swing. Islanders supported preservation publicly with their vote and GHF's membership numbers continued to increase. Foundation leaders felt optimistic about the future of the Strand and even held discussions over the question of extending their restoration efforts to structures on Mechanic, one block south of Strand. The Ufford Building at 303-309 Tremont Street stood as one of only five intact pre-Civil War commercial buildings in Galveston and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its location at the corner of Mechanic and Tremont made it a connection between the restoration work on the Strand and the potential revitalization of Mechanic Street. E. L. Ufford had worked with local builder John Brown to construct the three-story, cast-iron trimmed building in 1860. The structure survived numerous fires and was advertised in the City Directory as "Ufford's Iron Front Fire-Proof Building."107 The First

Hutchings-Sealy National Bank purchased the Ufford building in 1976, and GHF began to worry about the structure's future. The bank needed space for parking, and GHF feared the bank would tear down the historic building. In early June 1977 Peter Brink reassured GHF's Executive Committee that the bank decided to wait until fall to make a decision on the structure's fate. Brink and Sally Wallace met with bank president Charles Worthen about the possibility of a property swap with GHF that would allow the building to be spared and provide the bank with much needed parking spaces.108

On June 22, 1977, GHF leaders noticed demolition barricades set up around the Ufford Building, and the situation became more serious. Brink cancelled a planned trip to Washington, D.C., and meetings with the National Trust to remain in Galveston. He and Sally Wallace went to the First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank to inquire about the change — they were certain there had been a misunderstanding. They discovered that President Worthen was out of the country. Senior Vice-President Wayne Waller informed the pair that despite Brink's conversations with Worthen, the bank's executive committee decided to tear down the Ufford Building for additional parking spaces and the bank had already signed a contract for demolition. GHF called an emergency Executive Council meeting for that evening to discuss the situation. Foundation leaders agreed to continue to communicate with the bank and ask them to postpone the demolition while an alternative could be negotiated. They also decided to request that the

city council suspend the demolition permit. Brink, Whorton, and Wallace met with bank chairman Preston Shirley the following day. The group decided to investigate further the idea of transforming the ground floor of the Ufford Building into a parking facility without tearing down the building. This scenario involved GHF paying the bank for part of building’s value, funding the necessary renovations, and granting the bank a no-cost perpetual lease on the ground floor. GHF would hold title to the building. The bank agreed to postpone demolition until this proposal could be further investigated and GHF agreed to "take no action attempting to block demolition." A week later, GHF leaders and bank officials met again, and both sides again agreeing to continue exploring the ground floor conversion. Brink believed the Ufford Building would be saved from destruction and that the restoration could be agreed upon.

On the afternoon of July 6, 1977, the compromise situation took a turn for the worse. At approximately 4 P.M., someone notified GHF that all of the third floor windows of the Ufford Building had been removed. In 1980, Brink described the situation in detail:

We, in a frenzy, I think it was Sally and I again, ran over to the bank to try and find somebody. We tried to find Charlie Worthen, he was out of town for the day. Preston Shirley was in California. Bob Hutchings, who had also been party to the meeting with Preston, said he didn’t know anything about a demolition order. He couldn’t understand how this was happening. Then we talked to another officer of the bank, one of their vice-presidents for loans or something and he didn’t know anything about it.

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109 GHF Executive Board Meeting Minutes, June 22, 1977, GHF Archives; Elbert Whorton, Jr. and Peter Brink to Patsy Poole, June 23, 1977, Box 11, GHF Admin Records; Elbert Whorton Jr and Peter Brink to Preston Shirley, June 23, 1977, Box 11, GHF Admin Records.
110 "Memo of Meeting between Dr. Elbert Whorton, Sally Wallace, Peter Brink, and Preston Shirley, held June 23, 1977," Box 11, GHF Admin Records.
111 "Memorandum of Meeting on Thursday, June 30, 1977," Box 11, GHF Admin Records.
112 "Demolition Stopped After 3-Hour Sit-In"; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, July 6, 1977, GHF Archives; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980.
So we were in this situation that the building was in the process of being torn down and nobody at the bank knew how that was happening, and we couldn’t reach the key leaders of the bank, Charlie Worthen and Preston Shirley. We were just – I don’t know what the word it – in a state of shock.

{Interviewer Robert Jones: In retrospect, it has all the elements of high comedy.}

It is a real farce and a tragedy at the same time, yes. In any case, we went in the building just out of the energy of feeling that the whole thing was absolutely ludicrous. At least if the building was going to be torn down, first of all we wanted the agreement honored. We couldn’t believe the bank was going to break their word that they’d given us in these negotiations. We thought there’d been a huge misunderstanding. We were determined to go in there and delay the demolition until it could get cleared up. That’s what we did. There were maybe eight of us on the top floor. At the same time we were doing that, we had gone to one of the city council members and asked for an emergency meeting of the City Council.¹¹³

GHF leaders, faced with a crisis and the arrival of a construction crane from the Olshan Demolishing Company at 5:30 P.M., made a decision to stage a sit-in and halt any further damage. At 6 P.M. they entered the building and took up a position on the third floor. The group refused to leave until Worthen or Shirley resolved the issue or the City Council met to suspend the demolition permit. Evangeline Wharton, GHF’s Vice-President of Programs, told the Daily News, “If some agreement is reached, we’ll leave. If not, I’m not leaving this building. We’re not going to let this building be destroyed. It is the key building to the restoration of Mechanic Street.”¹¹⁴ GHF Executive Board members held an emergency board meeting at the Ufford Building at 7 P.M. to authorize President Elbert Whorton, Brink and Wallace to address the City Council and seek a

¹¹³ Brink, interview, December 19, 1980.
¹¹⁴ “Demolition Stopped After 3-Hour Sit-in”; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980.
temporary suspension of the permit. The board members also authorized the trio to “take any further action appropriate to prevent demolition except to bring a lawsuit without calling another special meeting of the Executive Committee.”115 The Galveston City Council met in an emergency session at 7:30 that evening. Shortly before the meeting, Brink reached Preston Shirley by phone and he confirmed with both Brink and Galveston Mayor John Unbehagen that an agreement had in fact been made between bank leaders and GHF to halt demolition until the Bank’s Board of Directors could properly consider the compromise. The City Council voted to temporarily suspend the demolition permit, and GHF leaders abandoned their sit-in at 8:15 P.M.116

The First Hutchings-Sealy Bank Board of Directors met on July 12, 1978, to consider the compromise proposal. The final version presented at the meeting called for the bank to sell the building to GHF below cost and the foundation paying for all renovations. The ground floor would be opened up to allow for twelve parking spaces and the bank would be granted a perpetual lease for the spaces. The second and third floors would be converted into retail space and apartments. GHF estimated their total cost on the project around $80,000; however, leaders expected to lose only about $10,000 on the project due to an anticipated matching grant from the Texas Historical Commission and money reclaimed by selling the building once the parking renovations had been completed.117 Brink remained optimistic that the situation could be resolved in such a way that both sides would be happy.118 The bank’s Board of Directors did not

115 GHF Executive Board Committee Meeting Minutes, July 6, 1977, GHF Archives.
118 Sussman, “GHF Backs Parking-Preservation Plan.”
agree and voted unanimously to proceed with the demolition. The bank board issued a statement on the decision that revealed their opinion that the plan “was not practical,” but they also sought to reassure preservationists by stating, “In taking this action, the bank’s board of directors expressed its continued desire to support the Galveston Historical Foundation in the restoration and development of the Strand, as it has in the past, and expressed its regret that any controversy has occurred.” GHF leaders were not pleased. The Executive Committee met that evening to again discuss their options. After considering several options including appealing to the City Council, asking the bank to reconsider, and pursuing a public relations campaign, they settled on legal action. Attorneys Bob Moore, who represented the petitioners in the Pier 19 controversy, and Ron Gipson sat in on the special meeting. GHF’s Executive Committee voted to hire Moore “to pursue immediately any appropriate legal remedy to rescue the E. L. Ufford Building from destruction or to delay its destruction until it is fully apparent that Federal laws have been fulfilled by all responsible private and public entities.” They further authorized director Brink “to take such steps as may be required in the pursuit of appropriate legal remedies” and agreed to “use all appropriate means to bring the facts and merits of this controversy before the public.” In the following days, GHF sent a memo to its membership detailing the controversy, including the reasons for the sit-in, and the proposed compromise. It also included the memorandums drafted following the

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120 GHF Special Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, July 12, 1977, GHF Archives.
121 Ibid.
June 23 and 30 meetings with bank officials. GHF released the information to the 
*Galveston Daily News* as well.\(^{122}\)

Moore filed suit against the bank, Olshan Demolition Company, the Secretary of 
the Interior, and the Comptroller of the Currency in U.S. District Court in Houston early 
on July 13, 1977. The suit called into question “whether the bank’s ownership of the 
Ufford Building violates a federal statute regulating banks’ real estate holdings.”\(^{123}\) It 
also alleged that the Secretary of the Interior failed to carry out his responsibility in 
determining the historical significance of the Ufford Building, a structure on the National 
Register administered by the Department of the Interior. Although GHF only officially 
hired Moore and authorized legal action at the July 12 meeting, Brink and other leaders 
prepared for the legal fight well in advance; legal action had always been their 
contingency plan to save the historic structure.\(^{124}\) The bank applied to the City Council 
for a demolition permit at roughly the same time GHF filed suit, and although the City of 
Galveston granted the permit, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order halting 
any destruction of the Ufford Building. At the hearing before U.S. District Judge Robert 
O’Connor on July 14, GHF received a preliminary injunction against the structure’s 
destruction. The court ordered that the building be protected until the Department of the 
Interior completed a historical survey of the structure. The injunction pleased Brink and 
GHF leaders, and they hoped that the time needed to complete the survey would allow 
the two sides to continue their talks to save the important landmark.\(^{125}\)

\(^{122}\) Elbert B. Whorton, Jr. and Peter H. Brink to GHF Membership, July 1977; Sussman, “GHF Going to 
Court because Bank Wants Building Razed”; Brink, interview, December 19, 1980.


\(^{124}\) Ibid; Brink Oral History, December 19, 1980.

GHF won a temporary reprieve for the Ufford Building but it came at a cost to the Foundation’s public reputation. A debate over the acceptability of GHF’s actions emerged in the *Galveston Daily News* following the issuance of the preliminary injunction. The *News* reported on July 17, 1977, the results of its weekly “Instapol,” in which surveyed Galvestonians expressed disapproval of the Ufford Building sit-in and subsequent actions on a two-to-one basis. Days later, on July 21, 1977, the *News* came out with a lead editorial, “Action of GHF is Regrettable.” The newspaper declared “It is highly regrettable that the Galveston Historical Foundation, Inc., representatives resorted to trespass and illegal entry in the controversy over the fate of the Ufford Building at 23rd and Mechanic Streets.”126 The editorial addressed a concept that had been raised in Galveston previously — private enterprise and the rights of property owners to do as they wished. The *News* did not chastise GHF for its desire to save the historic structure but for the methods it utilized. The newspaper believed, “it is the bank’s prerogative to do as it sees fit.”127 The editorial concluded:

It’s hardly the kind of example expected of the highly-respected cultural leaders in the Galveston Historical Foundation. It is highly questionable whether that type of non-reasoned reaction of passion is justified, even if it does result in saving the building from demolition. To be dedicated and interested is one thing, but to be dictatorial and feel that a cause puts its followers above the law is self-defeating in the long run.128

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127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
Letters to the Editor in favor of GHF began pouring in. Robert Lynch, Strand Building owner and preservationist, questioned why Galvestonians failed to recognize the value of their architectural heritage and the economic potential of historic tourism. Larry Wygant, a GHF Executive Committee member, wrote in questioning “What is progress?” and urged Galvestonians to adapt the buildings of yesterday to the needs of today so they could be preserved for future generations. Mrs. Patty Hurt, a native Galvestonian, wrote, “So the action of GHF in occupying the Ufford Building is, according to your editorial, ‘regrettable’, Good grief! How much more regrettable it would have been if they had stood by and let us have a demolished (and irreplaceable) historic building—as we may yet.” In early August, the *Daily News* changed its editorial policy to allow individual staff members to disagree in print with the paper’s lead editorials. Assistant News Editor, Mike McDaniel, wrote the first “Another View” column and expressed his support for GHF and the Ufford Building. More than two weeks after the critical editorial first appeared, GHF answered with a public statement defending its actions, thanking top bank officials, Mayor Unbehagen, and the City Council for their assistance on July 6, and expressing hope that the proposed compromise could be enacted. GHF began its press release by explaining, “To date GHF has not responded to this Editorial because we had hoped to leave behind those unfortunate events and concentrate on a

positive solution for the Ufford Building. A continuing misunderstanding of the facts about GHF 'presence' in the building, however, now forces us to set forth for the public and the News the facts regarding that sad day."

GHF assembled its Board of Directors as discussions over the fate of the Ufford Building took over both the Letters to the Editor section in the *Galveston Daily News* and the island’s gossip mill. The board debated the actions of the Executive Committee and the sit-in. However, the internal disagreement was hardly of the same scale as the Pier 19 discussions. At the meeting, Frank Gilbert, the National Trust’s director of landmarks and preservation law, also assessed the situation. Gilbert considered the Ufford Building controversy a battle of national importance — very few commercial districts had been preserved around the country and to lose a National Register structure for the construction of a parking lot created a crisis. Brink and GHF leaders had brought Gilbert from Washington, D.C., to help negotiate with First Hutchings-Sealy Bank. Discussions had stalled. Brink reported to the board that when he and Sally Wallace met with bank president Worthen the previous week, “he gave us no hope.” The bank continued to refuse any compromise situation. The lawsuit hardened their position, and the First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank even refused GHF’s offer to buy the Ufford Building outright for $90,000, a sale price that allowed the bank to make a nice profit.

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Progress on resolving the Ufford Building storm moved slowly. In early August the First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank filed a countersuit against GHF claiming a wrongful injunction and seeking $10,000 in damages. The suit was dismissed on procedural grounds in early September, but the bank quickly filed an appeal to the injunction with the Firth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals. As ordered by the court in the injunction, John Burns, an architect with the Historic American Building Survey and the Department of the Interior, came to Galveston to evaluate the Ufford Building in early August. Burns spent one day on the island and completed his preliminary report in late September. He determined the Ufford Building to be “an integral and significant part of the Strand National Historic Landmark District” and that per federal statute, “a documentary record of the building itself should also be made.” The report did not state the bank could not tear the Ufford Building down and construct a parking lot, only that a comprehensive report needed to be completed. The Department of the Interior responded that their office was not responsible for initiating the documentation, and the office of the Comptroller of the Currency denied any responsibility in the entire matter. First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank refused to do anything about the Ufford Building until its appeal was heard. The building simply stood vacant during this bureaucratic legal standstill — but, it still stood.

On the afternoon of Thursday, February 2, 1978, fire engulfed the Ufford Building and one of Galveston’s oldest commercial buildings was destroyed. At the time

Peter Brink told the *Galveston Daily News*, “It’s just a tragedy. It’s all over, the building’s destroyed.”\(^{139}\) Since the July sit-in, the bank simply left the building as it was, without so much as replacing or covering the third floor window openings. Brink and GHF leaders worried about the openings and an unsecured, ajar front door, and the Foundation even offered to seal the building at cost for the bank. Only weeks later, the building caught fire. Brink placed part of the blame for the fire on the bank, telling the *Daily News*, “There was total unrestricted access to the building. It’s basic common sense for the owners not to leave the building open. They shouldn’t leave the building open where it can become a public hazard.”\(^{140}\) The First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank refused to accept any responsibility.\(^{141}\)

The Ufford Building fire was one of three fires in the Strand area in only five days. The fires concerned the preservation community and the fire department investigated for signs of arson. Strand merchants and residents offered a reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for the fires, and the police department increased their patrol of the area. Brink and City Manager Tom Muehlenbeck urged property owners to secure their buildings. The Strand supported a growing homeless population, and the district’s old, unsecured buildings provided shelter. Witnesses often reported people coming and going from the Ufford Building and other vacant structures.\(^{142}\) Although many Galvestonians wondered if the controversy over its demolition had anything to do with the fire, later in the month, a thirty-year old...

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\(^{141}\) Ibid.

handyman who worked odd jobs in the district and lived in the low-rent Panama Hotel admitted to setting the three fires.\footnote{143} Seven months after GHF leaders staged a sit-in to save the building, the demolition crew flattened what remained of the Ufford Building on February 20, 1978. The fire damaged the building beyond repair, and GHF’s Executive Committee agreed to ask the federal judge to dismiss the injunction that kept the First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank from razing the building. The bank generously allowed GHF to salvage any cast-iron columns, ornaments, or other architectural embellishments from the structure they could. The fight for the Ufford Building was complete, and the First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank would have its parking lot.\footnote{144} Although the Foundation did what they thought was best in the situation and, in 1980, Brink acknowledged, “Once the fight actually happened, I can’t see anything that I would do differently now given the things that were happening,” he wished GHF had bought the building outright at the start.\footnote{145} Ultimately Brink accepted, “I guess in retrospect, I feel that sort of our indirect soft approach failed and the public approach failed too. It was like whatever you do you’re damned.”\footnote{146} The fight harmed GHF’s relations with one of its supporters, the First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank. Fortunately, the Foundation’s next President, Mike Doherty, was a bank officer and his involvement helped repair some of the damage.\footnote{147}
The Foundation achieved success in the revitalization of the Strand but it was not without resistance or criticism. The struggles over the Santa Fe Building, Pier 19, and the Ufford Building engaged GHF in differing levels of intensity and disagreement over the role of preservation and public and private enterprise. In the case of the Santa Fe Building, GHF recognized the building’s powerful location on the Strand and its restoration potential. The situation was not truly tenuous in the same manner as with the Ufford Building nor as prolonged as Pier 19, but it does demonstrate the persistence of GHF’s leadership and their desire to fill the buildings on the Strand with the “right” occupants. Because of its sheer size, a vacant or run-down Santa Fe Building would have loomed glaringly over the Strand. Fortunately the Foundation’s leading backer, the Moody Foundation, saved the structure without too much discord. The Pier 19 controversy, however, truly divided the city and the Foundation’s supporters. Although GHF initially positioned itself as an active participant in the fight to keep the Mosquito Fleet at Pier 19, as the struggle intensified and became truly divisive, the Foundation backed away. GHF maintained a preservationist stance, but leaders recognized the importance of separating the organization from the actual legal conflict. Finally, with the Ufford Building, GHF leadership literally stepped in front of the demolition crew to save one of Galveston’s oldest commercial buildings. Despite public criticism and a legal battle with First Hutchings-Sealy National Bank, the Foundation stood firm in its desire to protect the Ufford Building. Unfortunately, the structure was destroyed by arsonists. These three struggles on the Strand demonstrate the increasing influence of the preservationist movement in Galveston and illustrate the risks the Foundation was willing to take to achieve its restoration goals. GHF’s leadership wanted to rehabilitate the island
and transform the Strand into a successful historic commercial district. To do so, they had to not only persuade reluctant property owners and encourage business on the Strand, but they had to act when a building was threatened or a community landmark was challenged. The Foundation also had to look beyond the Strand — something it increasingly did as the 1980s dawned.
Chapter 6
Off the Strand

Galveston Historical Foundation’s struggle to save the Strand in the 1970s solidified Galveston’s preservation movement and inspired the hiring of Peter Brink in 1973. However, the Strand was not GHF’s only project. GHF continued to own and maintain the Samuel May Williams House as a historic house museum, it operated programs out of Saint Joseph’s Church, and it offered an active speaker’s bureau. The effort to restore Ashton Villa began prior to Brink’s arrival, but his contacts and Galveston’s Bicentennial movement aided in bringing the project to fruition. With the growth of staff and organizational revival inspired by the success of the Strand, GHF’s non-Strand projects expanded as well. The Foundation successfully restored Ashton Villa and opened it to the public in 1974. Leaders embarked on a massive project to restore the 1877 square-rigged sailing ship, Elissa. GHF also developed and refined the island’s residential preservation efforts and completed a comprehensive restoration of GHF’s first preservation project, the Samuel May Williams House. Both off and on the Strand, the Foundation inspired and worked for preservation change and a historic Galveston.

In 1971 the El Mina Shrine vacated Ashton Villa, the brick Italianate home built by James Moreau Brown. The Shriners had occupied the mansion since 1928 and utilized the space as offices and meeting areas. The city purchased Ashton Villa in 1970 for $125,000 with a $50,000 grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, $60,000 from the Moody Foundation, and $15,000 in smaller donations.
raised by GHF, but struggled from the beginning to raise funds for its restoration.\textsuperscript{1} In August 1972 the Texas State Historical Survey Commission awarded $12,500 in matching funds to the Foundation for the project. The city agreed to lease Aston Villa to GHF for $10 a year. At the time, many Galvestonians were just starting to accept the idea of a historic island, and Peter Brink had yet to be hired. GHF wished to restore the structure to its past glory as a grand nineteenth-century mansion and to open it for tours. Former GHF President Inez Lassell headed the restoration committee and was assisted by co-chair Edward R. “Tim” Thompson, Jr. The Foundation hired architect Railford Stripling of San Augustine in early 1972 to plan the renovation. In an effort to persuade islanders and “Texas notables” of the importance of restoring Aston Villa, GHF hosted a party in the mansion in late September. Almost 600 guests, including Miss Ima Hogg, Texas Historical Foundation President Cecil Burney, curator of the Winedale Inn Lonn Taylor, and curator of the White House Clement Conger, toured the structure and viewed a slide show featuring images of Galveston’s past. GHF estimated that the restoration would cost approximately $250,000, and Ashton Villa’s supporters hoped the party would not only inspire goodwill towards the project but also inspire monetary donations.\textsuperscript{2} By late October the Foundation had raised $90,000, including $10,000 from the Harris


and Eliza Kempner Fund, $10,000 from the Houston Endowment, and small donations totaling $20,000.³

GHF selected Swain Restoration of Houston for the Ashton Villa project, and work began in February 1973. After forty-four years as the El Mina Shrine, the structure needed both exterior and interior refurbishment. Swain removed three coats of exterior paint and cleaned the brick by hand. They mended and, where necessary, replaced the mansion’s window sashes and glass. The exterior shutters and ornamental iron work was repaired and repainted. Plans for the interior work included the installation of a new air conditioning and heating system, repair of the original pine floors, carpet replacement, repair and replacement of the plaster cornices and moldings, the restoration of damaged fireplaces and mantelpieces, and refurnishing the home to its condition when occupied by its original owners, the Brown family. GHF sought to acquire any furniture owned by the Brown family and early on accepted four pieces of Ashton Villa’s original sitting room furniture. The Foundation and the City of Galveston wanted the home to serve not only as a tourist site but also as a setting for official city receptions. Initial restoration work focused on the main house, and the Foundation left for later the refurbishment of the two-story carriage house and the large ballroom erected by the El Mina Shrine. Although Swain Restoration initially projected the work to take 270 days, the house did not open to the public until July 1974.⁴

³ Bott, “Villa Restoration Set for January.”
As the exterior and interior restoration on Ashton Villa wrapped up in the spring of 1974, the work and planning for its refurnishing and operation as a historic house museum intensified. Early on GHF brought in David B. Warren, then curator of the Bayou Bend Collection in Houston, to assess the interior restoration and refurbishment. In his “Initial Report on Furnishing Ashton Villa,” Warren concluded that Ashton Villa was “virtually intact as far as its original configuration” and that “The house, while a unity, shows a progression of taste in the second half of the nineteenth century.” Warren recommended that GHF interpret and furnish Ashton Villa not as it had been in 1858 when originally constructed but as “a continuous span over a period of roughly half a century” so that “architecturally and socially valid material from the later period” would not be eliminated.\(^5\) In his report, he was careful to stress to the Furnishings Committee that all furniture and decorative items in the house should be documented as historically appropriate. He stated plainly, “At no time should items be placed at Ashton Villa solely because they are pretty.”\(^6\) Warren continued to work with GHF as a consultant until the end of the project. He prepared a furnishing plan for GHF and assisted with the training of the first docent class in the late Spring of 1974.\(^7\) In December 1973 the Foundation also hired preservationist Ellen Beasley as a consultant to assist with plans for the opening and operation of Ashton Villa and to coordinate the docent training.\(^8\)

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\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Ashton Villa Brochure; “Details of Aston Villa Lecture Series Given,” *Galveston Daily News*, March 28, 1974; Speech by David Warren, Box 1, GHF Ashton Villa Records; “Interpretation Outline — Ashton Villa Docents,” Box 1, GHF Ashton Villa Records.

\(^8\) Peter Brink to Truett Latimer, December 22, 1973, Box 1, Galveston Historical Foundation Administrative Records MS#87-0019 (hereafter cited as GHF Admin Records), GTHC; Initial Meeting of Ashton Villa Committee Minutes, March 27, 1974, Box 1, GHF Ashton Villa Records; GHF Steering
The Foundation scheduled the grand opening for July 27, 1974. By then $225,000 had been spent on the restoration, refurbishment, and landscaping of the structure, but as Peter Brink stated, “The foundation is in critical need of additional funds for Ashton Villa.” Despite a successful fundraising campaign, GHF faced a shortage of cash to finish the project. Tim Thompson, Sally Wallace, and Ballinger Mills arranged a $82,000 line of credit on favorable terms from a consortium of three Galveston banks — the American Bank, Bank of Galveston, and University National Bank — in order to finish the project. GHF believed that once restored Ashton Villa would be self-supporting with its operating expenses paid by visitor fees and possibly the renting of space in the ballroom for offices and the carriage house for a shop or tea room. Leading up to and following the 1974 opening, the Foundation continued to urge supporters to donate to the Ashton Villa project through newspaper articles and GHF communications. GHF retired the debt though a combination of donations and grants from foundations in 1977.

Committee Meeting Minutes, January 10, 1974, Box 1, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Russell V. Keune, National Trust for Historic Preservation, October, 28, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records.


11 “Plans for Aston Villa Will Make it Active Spot,” Galveston Daily News, November 29, 1973; Peter Brink to Merritt Warner, December 13, 1973, Box 1, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Doug Brown, December 3, 1973, Box 1, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Oveta Culp Hobby, December 17, 1973, Box 1, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, December 20, 1973, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.

Over three hundred visitors toured the house and celebrated its grand opening in 1974. Mary Moody Northen, assisted by GHF President Ross, Galveston Mayor R. A. Apffel, and past Galveston Mayor Eddie Schreiber, cut the ceremonial ribbon to open the house museum. The event not only observed the completion of the mansion but also the dedication of Ashton Villa as Galveston’s Bicentennial Headquarters. Northern, as honorary chairman of Galveston County’s Bicentennial Committee, presented the official Bicentennial flag that would be flown from the Villa’s flagpole throughout the Bicentennial period. During the dedication ceremony, GHF president and former Galveston Mayor Dr. M. L. Ross welcomed the public and reflected on the importance of Ashton Villa’s restoration to the growing preservation movement. He stated, “Galveston has recognized that its primary strength is in Galveston and not somewhere else,” and “Ashton Villa is the heart beat of the whole system of the island. I hope it will pump oxygen into other historical areas and we will all become contaminated with the feeling. I hope the villa causes historical interest to become the septicemia of the island.”

Dr. Ross’s odd medical references would not have seemed as offbeat to a crowd filled with University of Texas Medical Branch staff members and their families. The Foundation arranged for U.S. Congressman Jack Brooks, who assisted in securing federal funding for the restoration project, to be the featured speaker; however, at the last moment he was unable to attend. Dr. Ross read his speech, which praised the island for its leading role in the upcoming Bicentennial and commended the “untiring and dedicated efforts of many

individuals who have given unselfishly of their time and resources to make this dream become a reality.”

GHF did not include the restoration of the ballroom or the two-story carriage house as part of its initial plans, but as work on the main house progressed and the plan to lease the ballroom to the Chamber of Commerce fell through, GHF sought alternative solutions. Believing the American Revolution Bicentennial to be “of utmost importance to our community,” the Galveston Rotary Club granted $6,750 towards the restoration of the Ashton Villa Carriage House as a Bicentennial Visitors’ Center in 1974. As Galveston’s designated Bicentennial Headquarters and as a highly visible house museum on one of Galveston’s busiest streets, the Carriage House was a perfect location for a tourist information center. Bob Sealy donated an additional $7,500 towards the project. The physical renovation work, supervised by Michael Doherty, included the removal of false ceilings and the exposure of the original eighteen-foot ceilings and brick walls. The center opened February 23, 1975, and featured photographic exhibits of Galveston attractions and displays on Galveston’s Bicentennial events. Ashton Villa docents operated the center and served as a resource for visitors interested in the island’s history and goings-on. Three hundred people attended the Visitor’s Center’s dedication ceremony where Northen happily announced the Texas Historical Commission’s recent award of $80,000 in grants for Galveston restoration projects. Northen also announced the Moody Foundation’s purchase of the half block of property between Ashton Villa and

14 “Ashton Villa Dedicated as Bicentennial Center.”
the Rosenberg Library and revealed their intention to transform the land into a park and joint parking lot for Ashton Villa and library visitors.\textsuperscript{16} In all, the transformation of the Carriage House into Bicentennial Visitor’s Center cost almost $17,000, including almost $14,000 on physical renovation, $1,110 on exhibitions, and $1800 on a multi-media presentation about the 1900 Storm.\textsuperscript{17} Ashton Villa opened a gift shop in the Carriage House during the Summer of 1975, and although the Bicentennial came and went, the Visitors’ Center remains.\textsuperscript{18}

As the Carriage House was being transformed, GHF made plans for Ashton Villa’s ballroom. GHF leaders discussed the transformation of the large space into “an indoor Victorian garden for public and private receptions, dinners, and gatherings,” and they worked with the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers and Howard Barnstone to complete design and architectural plans.\textsuperscript{19} GHF added an air conditioning system, plastered and painted the walls, restored the 400-square-yard floor, updated the restrooms, and remodeled the ballroom’s kitchen. Galveston responded positively to the ballroom improvements. Civic, cultural, and professional groups rented the space for parties and events, and individuals booked it for


\textsuperscript{17}Peter Brink to Wilma Iannell, Texas Bicentennial Commission, April 28, 1976, Box 7, GHF Admin Records; Galveston Historical Foundation Annual Report, March 13, 1975-March 3, 1976, GHF Minutes, 1957-1975, Subject File, GTHC.

\textsuperscript{18}“Gift Shop Opens in Ashton Villa,” \textit{The Saccarappa: Newsletter of the Galveston Historical Foundation}, August-September 1975, GHF Archives.


In the summer of 1974 when Ashton Villa opened to the public, GHF’s next major non-Strand restoration project had already been identified, the 1877 tall sailing ship \textit{Elissa}. Galvestonians and national preservation professionals recognized that the combination of the waterfront and the historic commercial district is what made Galveston unique. The importance of this connection was stressed by Emily Whiteside in her early work for the American Bicentennial projects, by Architect Thomas M. Price in his 1973 Historical Development Plan for Galveston, and Ford, Carson, and Powell in their 1974 Strand Study, and later by Venturi and Rauch in their 1975 Action Plan for the Strand.\footnote{Galveston County Cultural Arts Council, “Call for Achievement: Bicentennial Goals of Galveston County,” December 18, 1972, Bicentennial Committee Subject File, GTHC; Thomas M. Price, \textit{Historical Development Plan for Galveston, Texas, 1973} (Galveston: The City of Galveston, Texas, 1973); Boone Powell, \textit{The Strand Restoration & Revitalization: A Study Prepared for The Galveston Historical Foundation} (San Antonio, Texas: Ford Powell & Carson Architects & Planners, 1974) (hereafter cited as \textit{The Strand Study}); Venturi and Rauch, Architects and Planners, \textit{The Action Plan for The Strand, prepared for the Galveston Historical Foundation}, November 1975, University of Houston Library.}

The burgeoning Pier 19 controversy and the threat that waterfront access would be cut off to tourists and laymen only intensified GHF supporters’ attachment to the harbor. Very early on Brink recognized the potential of a tourist museum ship docked in Galveston and believed that such a project would be the ideal complement to the Strand restoration.\footnote{Peter Brink, interview with the author, December 2006; “Request for City Options Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts,” 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records; Patricia Bellis Bixel, \textit{Sailing Ship Elissa} (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998): 32.}

Michael Creamer, curator of the Model Shop at the South Street Seaport Museum in New York City, visited Galveston in March 1974 to meet with Peter Brink and see for
himself GHF’s restoration efforts. Creamer worked and lived with Brink’s brother, David Brink, Waterfront Director at the South Street Seaport.\textsuperscript{23} Brink and Creamer dined with John Paul “Paulie” Gaido, a born-on-the-island native whose family had founded Gaido’s Restaurant in 1911. Gaido dreamed of bringing a replica of a nineteenth-century ship to Galveston to celebrate the island’s maritime connection and boost tourism. He assumed actual period ships were out of the question, but Creamer indicated otherwise and encouraged Gaido and Brink to seek out a nineteenth-century vessel. Brink believed that a ship with ties to Galveston would be the best for the island (and perhaps better for GHF’s fundraising efforts). The men agreed to embark on a search for such a ship and contacted Norman Brouwer, librarian at the South Street Seaport Museum, for his input. They discovered several options including the four-masted barque the \textit{Champigny} and the \textit{Peking} (since restored by the South Street Seaport), both of which the Galveston team determined would be too expensive to restore. Brouwer also sent the team information about a rundown Greek shipping vessel, the \textit{Elissa}. Although Creamer initially dismissed the \textit{Elissa} after seeing photographs, the fact that she had made two visits to Galveston in the 1880s and her smaller size made her an ideal candidate.\textsuperscript{24} The men brought their discovery to GHF’s leadership, and at the time they believed that the project would cost $60,000 to purchase, $50,000 to repair and move the ship from Greece to Galveston, and $300,000 to restore. GHF leadership agreed to raise $10,000 to place an exclusive option purchase agreement on the 1877 square-rigged barque, \textit{Elissa}. In June, Brink offered


\textsuperscript{24} Bixel, 32-33; Marsha Walker, “Welcome Home, \textit{Elissa},” \textit{InBetween}, July 1979; Walker, “\textit{Elissa}”; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, April 11, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records.
Roberts Investments and Management, Ltd. of Victoria, British Columbia, $40,000 for the ship and requested a fifteen-month option period.\textsuperscript{25}

In 1974, almost a century after her launch as a British merchant ship, the \textit{Elissa} existed as a rusting, dilapidated ship moored in Piraeus, Greece. Alexander Hall and Company of Aberdeen, Scotland, had built the iron-hulled, three-masted barque for Henry Fowler Watt, a Liverpool ship owner, and launched her on October 27, 1877.\textsuperscript{26}

She traveled all over the world as a tramp sailing vessel and, according to \textit{Elissa} historian Patricia Bellis Bixel:

\begin{quote}
She was small, but Watt clearly hoped to find a profitable niche for her in general cargo carrying. Because of her size she could enter and leave less-developed ports more easily, and her capacity—about eight boxcars of cargo—reduced her turnaround time. And because she needed a smaller amount of cargo, she could load and depart expeditiously. There was still a market for ships of her size and in the late 1870s, and a career in the British merchant marine tended to confirm romantic notions of square-rigged sailing.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

She arrived in Galveston on December 26, 1883, with a shipment of bananas from Tampico, Mexico, and one passenger, R.W. Reed, and departed a month later with 710,344 pounds of cotton. The \textit{Elissa} returned to the island in 1886, but less is known about this visit.\textsuperscript{28} In 1898 Watt sold the ship to the Norwegian firm of Bugge and Olsen, which renamed the \textit{Elissa}, the \textit{Fjeld}. In 1912 she was sold again, this time to Carl Johansson of Sweden and renamed \textit{Gustaf}. While under Swedish ownership, the ship

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, May 9, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 22, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Roberts Investments and Management Ltd., June 11, 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records.}
\footnote{Bixel, 6-7; \textit{Handbook of Texas Online}, s.v. "Elissa," http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/EE/etel.html\textit{Handbook of Texas Online} (accessed November 20, 2008); Walker, "Elissa"; "Historical Foundation's Elissa Project History, Future Explained."}
\footnote{Bixel, 14.}
\footnote{Bixel, 17-18; Walker, "Elissa"; Babette Fraser, "Where's Elissa?" \textit{InBetween November}; \textit{Handbook of Texas Online}, s.v. "Elissa."}
\end{footnotes}
received her first engine and her rig was refitted from a nineteen-sail barque rig into a less involved barkentine rig. With the refits, she sailed primarily around the North Sea and Baltic and changed Swedish ownership again in 1918 and 1919. In 1928 a group of Finnish investors purchased the *Gustaf* and she maintained the Scandinavian trade route. Thirty-one years later, in 1959, the ship’s owners sold her to A. Kavadas and D. Vassilatos of Piraeus, Greece. The Greeks renamed her *Christophoros* and used her solely as a motor boat, without sails and with shortened masts used as cargo booms. She initially worked as a trade ship among the Greek Islands and in 1966 began a brief career smuggling cigarettes between Yugoslavia and Italy. Sold in 1968, she was renamed *Achaeos* and again sold and renamed *Pioneer* in 1969. The rusting, decaying ship received a reprieve from the scrap yard in 1970 when negotiations began between the ship’s owners and preservationists interested in saving what they believed to be a once-grand sailing ship.²⁹

In the early and mid 1960s, two maritime preservationists, independent of each other, noticed the ship once known as the *Elissa* and quietly began looking into her history. Peter Throckmorton, a marine archeologist and sailor working in Europe, first noticed the ship, then named *Christophoros*, in 1961. He watched over it from a distance for years and in 1968 discussed the possibility of saving it with Peter Stanford, president of the South Street Seaport Museum. Karl Kortum of the San Francisco Maritime Museum learned about the ship while searching for a historic square rigged ship for the waterfront of Portland, Oregon. Although the Portland project did not work out, Kortum continued to investigate the prospect of restoring the barque. He sought investors and a home for the ship formally known as the *Elissa* in Monterrey, California, his own

²⁹ Bixel, 22-29; *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “Elissa”; Walker, “Elissa.”
institution in San Francisco, and even among wealthy American individuals and businesses — Kortum was dedicated to preserving the ship. In 1969 Stanford put Kortum in contact with Throckmorton, and they began working together toward their common goal. Roughly a year later with the ship next in line for the scrap yard, Throckmorton, using funds wired by Karl Kortum on behalf of the San Francisco Maritime Museum and working through Greek negotiators, purchased the *Achaeos* from her eleven owners for $11,000 in Greek drachmas. The deal closed dramatically in November 1970 with Throckmorton paying cash to each owner who carefully counted his 100 drachma notes.\(^30\)

The purchase saved the small ship, promptly legally renamed *Elissa*, from demolition but her future was not yet secured. The San Francisco Maritime Museum’s Board of Trustees approved the purchase but not a full restoration; and as the museum continued to pay more money to keep the *Elissa* afloat, its board became increasingly frustrated. Kortum, who really wanted the museum to transform the ship into a sail-training vessel, worked to find new owners. In 1972 Kortum and Throckmorton negotiated the sale of the *Elissa* to Canadian parliamentary member David Groos. Groos envisioned a restored *Elissa* docked as a tourist attraction by the waterfront of his hometown of Victoria, British Columbia. Unfortunately Groos found it difficult to secure financing for the ambitious project and died shortly after giving up his plan to bring her to Canada. Kortum and Throckmorton worked with the executors of Groos estate to help find the nineteenth-century ship an appropriate owner. Michael Creamer’s visit to

\(^{30}\) Bixel, 26-30; Walker, “Elissa”; *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “Elissa.”
Galveston in the spring of 1974 helped bring Kortum, Throckmorton, and GHF together to save the *Elissa.*

Roberts Investments and Management, Ltd., the *Elissa*’s holding company, accepted GHF’s option in August 1974, and GHF made arrangements to properly examine the ship. The Foundation paid Roberts Investments $10,000, funds loaned by Buddy Porterfield of Dickinson, and sent Creamer and Richard Futrell, director of restoration of the *Wavertree* at the South Street Seaport Museum, to Greece to inspect the *Elissa* in September. Creamer gave the ship a decent report, and the parties formally signed a twelve month exclusive option contract allowing GHF to purchase the *Elissa* for an additional $30,000 by early October. The Foundation closed the sale and assumed ownership of *Elissa* a year later, on October 2, 1975.

Galvestonians knew that the purchase and restoration of the *Elissa* would be costly, but in 1974 - 75 they began the project with an incomplete grasp of the situation. In 2006 GHF commented in an article in their periodic publication, *Galveston Preservation News,* that “If either Rybka [Walter Rybka, director of restoration for the *Elissa* 1977-1982] or GHF had understood the magnitude of what they were undertaking they would not have started; only this initial ignorance allowed the ultimate success of what has been hailed as American’s finest maritime restoration project.”

31 Bixel, 30-33; Walker, “*Elissa*”; *Handbook of Texas Online,* s.v. “Elissa.”
32 Peter Brink to Roberts Investments and Management Ltd., June 11, 1974; Peter Brink to Karl Kortum, July 22, 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records; Michael Creamer to William Roberts, July 22, 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Buddy Porterfield, August 16, 1974, Box 3, GHF Admin Records; GHF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, October 2, 1974, Box 2, GHF Admin Records; “Historical Foundation’s *Elissa* Project History, Future Explained”; Peter Brink to Merritt Warner, September 22, 1975, Box 6, GHF Admin Records; Draft Proposal to Moody Foundation, as part of letter from Peter Brink to Ed Protz, May 24, 1976, Box 8, GHF Admin Records; Bixel, 33; Walker, “*Elissa*”; *Handbook of Texas Online,* s.v. “Elissa.”
Creamer estimated that GHF could expect to spend $300,000 to $400,000 on the purchase and restoration. After examining the ship himself and receiving estimates of necessary work from the *Elissa*’s insurance company, Lloyd’s of London, the project’s cost projections rose. GHF would need to invest $40,000 to purchase the Elissa, approximately $90,000 in repairs to bring her to Galveston, and an additional $500,000 to properly restore her into a square-rigged sailing ship. It seemed like an ambitious but manageable fundraising project. Early fundraisers included sales of ice cream and cotton candy at both the 1974 and 1975 Festival on the Strand and several auctions of marine artifacts and antiques. GHF valued these community events as a way to bring in money but more importantly as a way to market its project in the community. The real fundraising would come from grants and donations of materials from foundations, companies, and governmental entities.\(^3^4\)

GHF’s initial schedule called for making necessary repairs to the *Elissa* in Greece and sailing her home to Galveston in late 1976. They expected to begin work shortly after the first of the year 1976.\(^3^5\) GHF embarked on an ambitious fundraising campaign, and by January 1976 Paulie Gaido, chairman of the *Elissa* Committee, reported cash and material donations totaling $147,000. Companies were especially receptive to donations of materials. Armco Steel Corporation donated all of the steel, Armco Steel Corporation donated all of the steel,


approximately 150 tons valued at more than $50,000, necessary for the restoration.

Stewart and Stevenson offered a marine engine and marine generator. Western Geophysical contributed electronic and navigation equipment. International Paint donated all the paint. Temple Industries agreed to supply lumber, and Wall Rope Works would provide rope. The Galveston Wharves assisted GHF by storing the materials free of charge.\(^{37}\) Brink and Gaido spent 1976 fundraising as Creamer worked to complete a restoration plan for the ship. They secured funding for the restoration project from many of GHF’s usual funding sources, including Houston Endowment ($25,000), the Brown Foundation ($25,000), and the Moody Foundation ($62,500). The timeline for the ship’s return to Galveston, however, lengthened as the year progressed. By July 1, 1976, with assistance from Richard Futrell, Peter Throckmorton, and David Brink, Creamer refined the restoration plan to include repairs required by the ship’s insurer, Lloyd’s of London, and restoration work that would allow for GHF to better market the Elissa’s return to Galveston. The new budget totaled almost $200,000, exclusive of materials and services already donated for the project, but GHF’s leaders remained optimistic that they could secure the necessary funding.\(^{38}\)

Despite the delays and continually expanding cost projections, on December 7, 1976, Brink felt moved to write GHF supporter and Elissa donor Bob Sealy that “I have


to confess at being more excited now about the project than I have been at any time in the three years that we have been working on bringing *ELISSA* home.” He continued in his letter to Sealy about a non-monetary achievement of the campaign, project buy-in by the public:

> I can’t tell you how pleased I am that more Texans are beginning to sense, what we have felt all along, that the *ELISSA* is an immensely important part of Texas history. *ELISSA* is, after all, the last surviving link with Texas and the Age of Sail — — the last of the thousands upon thousands of deep water sailing vessels ... We Texans don’t see ourselves as being linked to the sea the way they do on the East coast — — but the truth is — — we are and always have been, perhaps now more than ever.\(^{39}\)

In order to secure the long-term success of the *Elissa*, Brink needed to win the public relations war and gain the support of Galvestonians and other Texans.

*Elissa* Restoration Director Michael Creamer and recently hired Assistant Director Walter Rybka finally departed for Greece with a volunteer crew of four in late June 1977. They expected to complete the restoration and have the *Elissa* arrive in Galveston’s harbor fourteen to eighteen months later. Rybka commented in 1981 about the start of the project, “The high hopes and extreme innocence in which the Greek campaign began encountered some rude shocks.”\(^{40}\) To keep costs down GHF decided to use volunteers from Texas and New York who provided their own transportation to and from Greece and worked for room, board, and a small $150 per month stipend. The restoration work was often grueling, dirty, and dangerous. Regardless, as Bixel

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\(^{39}\) Peter Brink to Bob Sealy, December 7, 1976, Box 9, GHF Admin Records.

describes, “The eager shipbuilders threw themselves into the tasks at hand.”

Twenty-two men and women ultimately spent time in Piraeus working on the *Elissa* during “Greek Campaign.” They believed in the restoration project and recognized the value of saving the rusted, dilapidated ship. The *Elissa* was the oldest sailing ship on Lloyd’s of London’s Register of Shipping and one of the oldest square-rigged sailing vessels still floating. She was a floating historical artifact, with a Galveston connection, and GHF’s volunteers and supporters not only recognized her historical importance but also her potential to bring tourists to Galveston and Texas.

In late spring and early summer, before Creamer, Rybka, and the crew departed the island, GHF volunteers crated and readied the 200 tons of donated restoration materials, including masts, engines, tools, logs, rope, and steel, amassed by GHF for shipping to Greece. The Lykes Brothers Steamship Company donated their services and agreed to transport the items for free, saving GHF $20,000. The restoration team arrived in Greece at the end of June 1977, and although the *John Lykes* arrived on schedule in early August, the Greek government delayed the materials at customs. The team faced other delays when arranging a contract for the *Elissa’s* needed haul-out and dry dock repairs. As Rybka stated in 1981, “It was assumed all along the waterfront that we could afford any price. Since we were interested in a century-old sailing ship in a harbor full of motorships that could be repaired cheaper, it was also assumed that we

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were idiots.” After hiring a local contractor to “do all the shouting and arm-waving essential to negotiations,” the team arranged for the steel repairs, and the *Elissa* was pulled out of the water.

When in dry dock, the team discovered that the earlier survey of the hull’s riveted iron plates had significantly misjudged their condition and that the *Elissa* would require much more work than anticipated. Rybka described the situation:

> When the full extent of the needed renewal was known, some difficult decisions had to be faced. One alternative was to perform only those repairs that would get her to hold together long enough to reach Galveston and then take it from there. This was rejected on the grounds that the ship’s present deplorable condition was a result of many years of such thinking. And the ship was expected to float over seven thousand miles of ocean whose tranquility could not be guaranteed. Tailoring the job to the case at hand seemed like a good way to lose her. We decided that we were there to make good the strength of the ship, to get a sound bottom now and not later. The scary part was the [possibility] of running out of funds with the ship still missing enough of itself to float, and then watching her go for scrap because we set our sights too high.

Almost one-third of the iron hull needed to be replaced. The work took seven months and expended the *Elissa*’s restoration fund. In March 1978 Rybka wrote to Peter Brink, “This restoration has long since become a rebuilding and qualified as a ‘long and bloody war’ but we have come a very long way and if the present momentum can be sustained *Elissa* can be on her way home by this time next year.” With money tight and the ship still needing costly restoration work for it to sail (or motor) independently to Texas, GHF decided to alter their plans. They scrapped the idea of a dramatic homecoming and the

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44 Walker, “*Elissa*”; Bixel, 35.
45 Walker, “*Elissa*”; Bixel, 35.
46 Walker, “*Elissa*.”
47 Walter P. Rybka to Peter Brink, March 17, 1978, Box 13, GHF Admin Records; Walker, “*Elissa*”; Bixel, 36-9.
romantic vision of a restored ship sailing gracefully into the Galveston harbor and
decided to tow the partially repaired *Elissa* across the Atlantic instead. The Foundation
believed that additional donations could be generated simply with the ship close by and
visible.  

By the time GHF decided to tow the *Elissa* back to Galveston and complete the
extensive restoration work required to transform the vessel into a sailing museum ship,
she had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States
Department of the Interior. Without this designation, GHF theoretically could not apply
for available federal grant funding. Traditionally these “historic places” had to be inside
the United States, and until *Elissa* reached American shores, GHF could not apply for the
designation. In May 1978 the Department of the Interior approved the *Elissa’s*
application, however, and she became the first item placed on the list while located
outside the boundaries of the United States. In anticipation of her approval, GHF had
applied earlier in the spring for grants from the Department of the Interior and the Texas
Historical Commission. In late July the National Trust for Historic Preservation
announced the *Elissa* had been selected as the recipient of a $15,000 Maritime
Preservation grant to help transport her to Galveston. At the time, it was the largest grant
approved for the maritime program.  

After the ship launched on May 12, 1978, Creamer, Rybka, and the volunteer
crew readied the vessel for her crossing. They built a temporary deck, installed rails and

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49 Peter Brink to Truett Latimer, January 2, 1976, Box 6, GHF Admin Records MS; Whorton, Gaido, and
Brink to Merritt Warner, July 1, 1976; Peter Brink to Peter Stanford, President National Maritime
National Trust for Historic Preservation to Peter Brink, July 25, 1978, Box 14, GHF Admin Records;
“Grant to Help Bear Cost of *Elissa* Move,” *Galveston Daily News*, August 16, 1978; “*Elissa* Heading for
ladders, and loaded the *Elissa* with most of the 200 tons of restoration materials and tools carefully shipped to Greece the year before. Although final arrangements to tow her to Galveston had not yet been completed, as soon as the ship was prepared, Rybka and the crew departed Greece. Most had other jobs waiting for them and Rybka moved to Galveston. Michael Creamer, however, remained in Piraeus to orchestrate the tow and travel with her to Texas. *Elissa* finally left the harbor on December 12, 1978, eighteen months after Creamer and Rybka and the initial crew of four arrived for an eight-month restoration project. She arrived at Gibraltar eight days later after surviving a stormy trip across the Mediterranean. She sat out the winter in a protected berth in the Royal Navy Shipyards and departed for Galveston on June 25, 1979.50

Peter Brink, Paulie Gaido, and the *Elissa*’s supporters anxiously prepared for her arrival. Over $400,000 had been spent on her purchase, initial restoration, and transport to Texas. Five years after placing an option to purchase her, the *Elissa* was towed into the Galveston Harbor on July 20 and docked at Pier 22. GHF held a public welcome celebration on Saturday August 4, 1979, attended by over 200 people, “to acknowledge the individuals and organizations who have made possible *ELISSA*’s purchase, hull restoration, and return to Galveston . . . and whose commitment will make possible *ELISSA*’s completion as the magnificent three-masted square-rigger she is.”51 Despite

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the public celebration and enthusiasm of GHF leaders, according to Bixel, "Galveston backers were stunned and disappointed" when the *Elissa* arrived. She looked like a rusty old ship and not the grand sailing vessel that Brink, Gaido, and GHF had been advertising. Walter Rybka, who the Foundation promoted to Restoration Director, spoke at the August 4, 1979, homecoming event. He called upon Galvestonians to envision something more, stating:

> Very little you will see aboard does not require work or change. So I must call upon you to see through rust and rot, the scars of battle with the elements, with time, with neglect. See her with a bright wood rail contrasted with her hull, telling you there’s not a straight plate in her. See her with every piece of her gear ready to work, for there is nothing in her without some purpose to it. See her with her masts in, yards crossed and rigging set up, making a strong and delicate sculpture of line and space. This is one of the very special objects on the face of the earth. . . . She represents an artistry that goes far beyond just making do.  

To complete the *Elissa*, GHF leaders needed to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars, and it could not allow the current condition of the ship to discourage their hard-won supporters in their continued time of need.

With the *Elissa* in Galveston, a new plan for her restoration and funding needed to be developed. In September 1979 GHF secured a large $500,000 challenge grant from the Department of the Interior’s Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service for *Elissa*’s restoration and a $27,350 planning grant from the National Trust to develop a new plan of operations. The Moody Foundation also pledged an additional $250,000 for

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52 Bixel, 39.

the project. David Brink, Peter Brink’s brother, consulted on the project during various periods, and GHF brought him back in 1979 and 1980 to re-evaluate the situation and best determine how to administer the large grants and the *Elissa’s* program. David Brink worked with consultant Michael Cochran, and after spending three months reviewing the *Elissa’s* restoration effort and fundraising, he recommended that GHF close the project and take a loss. Peter Brink and the supporters of the *Elissa* refused to walk away from the ship. They had community support and some financial backers, plus the Foundation was already five years into the project. To finish the *Elissa*, GHF needed to step up its operations and fully dedicate the organization to the ship’s restoration. The Foundation decided to hire David Brink as a full-time project director to coordinate fundraising and the development of an interpretation and operational plan for the ship and let Rybka focus on the restoration work. David Brink worked to develop an ambitious two-year fundraising and restoration plan that would have the ship opening on July 4, 1982; but to accomplish this timeline, GHF revised its goal for the *Elissa*. Instead of restoring the ship into a fully functional sail training ship that spent weeks of the year at sea, the *Elissa* would be transformed into “an 1877 vintage museum ship operable for excursion sails but not to attempt to carry passengers for hire or make it a ‘sea experience’ vessel.” This change would allow for a much simpler restoration program and cost significantly less to complete. Ultimately, David Brink and Rybka finalized their cost estimate to complete the project at $2.5 million.  

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55 GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 13, 1980, GHF Archives; Bixel, 39-41; Walker, “Elissa”; Fraser, “Where’s Elissa?”; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 1, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, February 12, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Executive
The *Elissa* needed a large infusion of cash to succeed. By the spring of 1980 GHF already spent one million dollars, including the Moody Foundation’s recent $250,000 grant. The $500,000 federal funding grant remained; however, that only covered one-fifth of the completion budget. The Brink brothers and GHF decided to appeal yet again to their biggest supporter, the Moody Foundation. Mary Moody Northen and the Foundation supported GHF through general administrative grants and funding for individual projects. They had given $327,000 towards the *Elissa* already, but GHF was in a bind. The Brink brothers, Rybka, and the *Elissa*’s leaders went for broke. They asked the Moody Foundation for $750,000 to finish the project. The Foundation said yes. Peter Brink reported to GHF’s *Elissa* Committee on June 24, 1980, “This is clearly an extraordinary grant. It represents a great conviction by the Trustees of The Moody Foundation that a restored *ELISSA* will be a tremendous asset to Galveston and Texas, and a great faith in the ability of the Historical Foundation to complete the project as promised.”

Not only did the grant infuse the *Elissa* project with much needed funds, it gave the stalled project a much-needed marketing boost. The grant was the largest grant ever received by GHF and demonstrated to other foundations and potential sources of support that the Moody Foundation had complete confidence in the *Elissa* project.

Peter and David Brink worked passionately to raise the rest of the money required. The Foundation hired Dini and Associates as fundraising consultants and coordinated a

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Committee Meeting Minutes, April 1, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 22, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Annual Report of Activities, July 9, 1981, GHF Archives.  
56 Peter Brink to *Elissa* Committee, June 25, 1980, Box 17, GHF Admin Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 13, 1980, GHF Archives; Peter Brink to Ed Protz, June 11, 1980, Box 17, GHF Admin Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, June 24, 1980, GHF Archives; Bixel, 40; Walker, “*Elissa*.”  
57 Brink to *Elissa* Committee, June 25, 1980; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, June 24, 1980; Walker, “*Elissa*”; Bixel, 40-1; Peter Brink, interview by Robert Jones, December 19, 1980, transcript, Galveston Oral History Collection, GTHC.
publicity campaign for the ship. Roughly a year later, in August 1981, David Brink reported raising $2,066,000 of the $2,518,000 estimated Phase II restoration cost. Major donors for the second phase of the restoration included the Houston Endowment, the Cullen Foundation, and the Brown Foundation. Also by this time, GHF and the Wharves arranged a long-term lease to berth the restored Elissa at Pier 22, and the Economic Development Administration had awarded a $92,700 grant to rehabilitate the pier.

With the cash flow secure, Walter Rybka concentrated on completing the actual restoration work on the Elissa. Despite a comprehensive search, Rybka could not locate the ship’s original plans, nor could he locate much in terms of records or description of the ship. Without the original plans and little supplementary documentation, Rybka and the restoration team used information gleaned from the plans of similar ships built by Alexander Hall and calculations based on the Elissa’s proportions to develop architectural plans. The restoration work included expensive steel work, the laying of wood decks, the re-positioning of the vessel’s three masts, the laying of three levels of decks, the reconstruction of officer’s quarters and other interior spaces, and the outfitting of essential equipment such as pumps and electrical systems. Initially, Rybka hired local outside contractors for the steelwork and hull repairs, but as the project progressed and Galveston’s maritime workers chaffed at the high quality of handiwork required, the Elissa’s restoration team was forced to look elsewhere. Skilled maritime craftsmen

59 GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 24, 1981, GHF Archives; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 28, 1981, GHF Archives.
familiar with restoration projects traveled to Galveston to complete the work. They worked not only for pay but because they believed in the Elissa and in maritime preservation. Steve Hyman, for example, traveled from San Francisco to fabricate the several miles of rigging necessary. Nat Wilson of Maine designed the Elissa’s eighteen sails and orchestrated their sewing, a task that required twelve thousand square feet of canvas. GHF hired New York artist Eli Kuslansky to sculpt the ship’s figurehead. Again, no records existed to document the original, but the Foundation guided him to carve the figurehead in honor of Mary Moody Northen and provided photographs from her youth. Ironically, when the figurehead was complete and Northen was informed it was carved in her likeness, she reportedly stated “I never looked like that.” In addition to the paid contractors and craftsmen, the project hired day laborers who gathered at the dock each morning, and each weekend a crew of volunteers worked alongside the paid workers. The ship left its initial Galveston home at Pier 22 for the Duval Sulphur Company Pier in February 1980. She spent time at Todd’s Shipyards in the fall of 1980 and returned to Pier 22 in November 1981. The sight of the ship and its busy restoration crew provided an interesting attraction for visitors and Galvestonians alike. Mary Moody Northen enjoyed visiting the site and would observe the work from a folding chair near

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her parked limousine. Although tourists could not explore the ship itself until her grand
opening, they could observe the remarkable effort of her restoration crew.62

The Elissa opened to the public on schedule with a July 3, 1982, christening
celebration and a day of free tours on July 4, 1982. About 200 supporters attended the
Saturday afternoon dedication where Mary Moody Northen christened the ship in the
traditional manner by breaking a champagne bottle against her iron hull. GHF
coordinated a smattering of events to celebrate the opening of the Elissa, including a
private "sneak peak" reception for the major project donors on July 2, a gala opening of a
maritime art exhibition at the Galveston Arts Center Gallery also on July 2, and a benefit
concert featuring traditional maritime songs at the restored 1894 Grand Opera House on
July 3.63

Although the Elissa looked complete to the untrained eye, additional work would
be required to make her a certified sailing vessel. The project continued to be over
budget, and after the official opening of the ship, most of the professional restoration
craftsmen left Galveston for other employment. The volunteer crew and a few remaining
paid workers labored in the evenings and on weekends to complete the project. GHF
planned to sail the Elissa on Labor Day weekend, September 4-6, 1982, and to meet the

62 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, February 12, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Executive
Committee Meeting Minutes February 19, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes,
September 23, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, October 28, 1980, GHF
Archives; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, November 24, 1981, GHF Archives; Bixel, 46; Lord,
Elissa: Where She's Going from Here; Peter Brink and David Brink to Ed Protz, March 12, 1982, GHF
Archives; Susan Haire, Elissa: She is more than just a ship, Galveston Daily News, June 27, 1982.
63 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, March 23, 1982, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes, May 25, 1982, GHF Archives; GHF Special Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, June
8, 1982, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, June 29, 1982, GHF Archives; Peter
goal, the dedicated volunteer crew not only needed to finish the *Elissa*’s restoration but also had to learn to sail her. Sailing a square-rigger took teamwork and required the crew to be familiar with distinctive equipment and sailing procedures. GHF contracted retired Coast Guard Captain Carl G. Bowman, then in charge of sailing the San Diego Maritime Museum’s *Star of India*, to lead the crew during the day sails and hired German Captain Joe Braun, a former second mate on the sailing ships *Passat* and *Pamir*, to assist with the training and drills. Although Rybka was still working on the ship at 1:30 A.M. the morning of the *Elissa*’s first sail, the ship set sail on schedule, Labor Day weekend 1982. She lacked a motor and on each of the four days of sailing she was towed from Pier 22 to the ship channel. As the Gulf wind filled her sails, Paulie Gaido and Peter Brink’s dream of bringing a restored nineteenth century sailing ship to Galveston was realized. Eight years and $4 to $6 million after her purchase in 1975, the rusted, dilapidated converted motor boat had been functionally restored to her past glory as a square-rigged sailing ship.\(^{64}\)

The *Elissa* project tested GHF’s organizational strength and pushed GHF to its limits in fundraising and volunteerism. Up to this point, GHF operated as a largely volunteer organization with a miniscule paid staff. Patricia Bellis Bixel believes the *Elissa* project to be the impetus of what propelled the Foundation into a nationally recognized preservation force. In her history, *Sailing Ship ELISSA*, she writes:

> In hindsight, the organizational changes necessitated by the *Elissa* restoration pushed GHF into the forefront of national preservation efforts. *Elissa* forced GHF, long a savior of

historic buildings and a developer of historic architectural districts, to raise more money than ever before from a wider variety of sources and a broader geographic range. Completing the ship restoration transformed GHF from primarily a local organization of volunteers to one of the largest, most successful preservation groups in the country.\textsuperscript{65}

To finish the Elissa on schedule and pay for it while continuing effectively to manage their other growing programs, the Foundation needed to transition into a professionally run non-profit, supported and guided by a large cadre of dedicated volunteers. However, in 1980 when GHF made the decision to dedicate itself fully to the Elissa with the hiring of David Brink as project director, the Foundation was already in the midst of a massive expansion of programs, fundraising, and preservation efforts around the island.

In many ways, the year 1980 can be seen as a turning point in GHF’s organizational history. The Foundation celebrated the grand opening of its permanent offices and the Strand Visitors Center in the Hendley Building on January 27, 1980. They committed to finishing the Elissa’s restoration and hiring a proper administrative staff for the project. A contract to complete the renovation of the Samuel May Williams House was signed that year as well. The Strand rehabilitation/redevelopment project was well underway, and the restored Ashton Villa welcomed thousands of tourists and hosted special events. GHF also secured the funding to develop their fledgling residential programs department in 1980. The Foundation had grown rapidly since Peter Brink arrived seven years earlier, and leaders recognized the need to reassess the organization’s structure, by-laws, and goals. President Andrew E. Leslie reported on 1980’s distinctive changes in his Annual Report dated July 9, 1981, stating:

\textsuperscript{65} Bixel, 39.
As the range of achievements above indicate, GHF has grown from a small organization initiating 2 or 3 projects to a medium-size organization directing 6 or 7 major projects simultaneously. GHF is thus responding to the challenges and opportunities of Historic Galveston. This means, however, that GHF itself must continually adapt and mature so that we as an organization handle these broader and more complex responsibilities effectively and well. . . . By growing to handle its responsibilities GHF will provide a framework for vigorous volunteer work, effective community action, and the most productive direction of our resources to carry out our common purpose. Historic Galvestonians, Houstonians, and our many visitors will be the beneficiaries of our work. And, in the process, all of us will experience a genuine satisfaction in our contribution. . . and a good bit of enjoyment working together.66

In February 1980 the Board of Directors approved a Special Goals Committee led by Foundation President Andy Leslie to review GHF’s stated purpose and organizational goals. At the time, much of GHF’s energy was necessarily focused on the Strand project, the Elissa, and Ashton Villa, but it had also recently dedicated itself to a residential preservation program with the hiring of residential director Steve Malkin and rehabilitation adviser Gwen Marcus.67

In the late fall of 1980 the Board of Directors approved a revised mission statement and a set of goals related to fulfilling the purpose and operating the Foundation’s programs. The revised purpose simply stated:

The purpose of the Galveston Historical Foundation is to unite and support our community in the understanding, research, appreciation, preservation, restoration, care and use of Galveston’s physical and cultural heritage, to provide visitors to Galveston with a quality experience of this heritage, and to demonstrate the importance of this

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66 GHF Annual Report of Activities, July 9, 1981; Bixel, 39;
67 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, February 12, 1980, GHF Archives.
This purpose eliminated the phrase, “for research and the collection and preservation in Rosenberg Library of documents, printed matter and relics” and represented a literal break with the Rosenberg that began when GHF’s precursor, the Texas Historic Society of Galveston, placed their archive in the newly constructed library’s fireproof vaults in 1904. The new purpose clearly represented the direction GHF was going as a historic preservation organization interested in promoting heritage and cultural tourism. The goals articulated this new direction and provided a unified way to implement them.

The Executive Committee then charged the special committee with reviewing the Foundation’s structure and determining ways to make the three-tiered leadership structure more effective. They presented their suggestions to the Executive Committee in April 1981, to the Board of Directors June 9, 1981, and to the membership at the Annual Membership Meeting July 9, 1981. The new by-laws maintained a three-tiered leadership structure but changed its composition, titles, and responsibilities. The new GHF would be headed by a Board of Advisers composed of fifty to one hundred members who met once a year to provide general guidance to the Board of Directors and review the Foundation’s work. The Board of Directors, twenty to thirty-two members, held the legal responsibility for GHF’s management and was charged with making policy and operating decisions. The members of the Board of Directors would include the president, first vice-president, treasurer, eight at-large directors, up-to fifteen area vice-presidents (in charge of GHF’s various programs), and up to five presidents of historic

69 “Bylaws of the Galveston Historical Foundation, Inc.,” May 24, 1973, GHF General Information Subject File, GTHC.
neighborhoods or districts. A seven-person Steering Committee composed of the
president, first vice-president, past president, treasurer, and three at-large members of the
Board of Directors would advise the Executive Director and advise and assist the Board
of Directors. This structure streamlined GHF’s operations yet kept a large number of
Galvestonians in prominent positions. The work of a professional staff could be guided
but not hindered administratively by the Foundation’s leadership, and the Foundation
could better accomplish its goals.

With the Strand revitalization going well and the Elissa purchased and on her way
home, the Foundation’s leadership decided in 1979 that time was right to further develop
its residential programs and hire a full-time staff person to manage the new department.
Although it had not been totally removed from efforts for the preservation of Galveston’s
residential areas, GHF did not focus on the island’s residential neighborhoods until this
time. James Gardner had worked with GHF in the late 1960s to catalog the island’s
historic architectural treasures for the Historic Architecture Building Survey and
recommended the creation of a residential historic district in Galveston’s East End.
Residents voted and the city approved the district’s creation in 1971. Galveston formed a
Historical District Review Board to administer the district’s zoning regulations, and
homeowners in the district were required to seek board approval for new construction and
exterior renovation plans as well as the demolition of structures. Not all residents
supported the decisions of the board, and relations between property owners and the

70 “Recommendations of the Goals Committee to the GHF Executive Committee,” April 9, 1981, Box 1,
Galveston Historical Foundation Records MS#90-0025 (hereafter cited as GHF Records), GTHC; GHF
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 14, 1981, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors Meeting
June 12, 1981, Box 1, GHF Records; “Proposed By-Laws Recommendations to the GHF Membership from
the Board of Directors” June 20, 1981, Box 1, GHF Records; Annual Membership Meeting Minutes, July
9, 1981, GHF Archives.
71 GHF Executive Committee Minutes, February 6, 1979, GHF Archive.
board were complicated by the fact that it took the city several years to develop written guidelines for homeowners to follow.\(^{72}\) Several years after the establishment of the historic district, residents formed the East End Historic District Association to "promote and stimulate revitalization and restoration of this unique neighborhood."\(^{73}\) Although not a GHF program, many of the Foundation's largest supporters resided in the East End and believed strongly in the importance of protecting their historic neighborhood. On February 13, 1975, the City Council created a second residential historic district, the Silk Stocking Precinct Historical District. Smaller than the East End Historical District, this district was located roughly between the 1100 through 1600 blocks of 24\(^{\text{th}}\) Street and avenues L, M, and N from 23\(^{\text{rd}}\) to 25\(^{\text{th}}\) Street, and its residents quickly formed the Silk Stocking Precinct Historical Association to unify the property owners.\(^{74}\) Both residential historical district associations served as conduits between residents, the City Planning Department, and the Historic District Review Board to further their mutual goals and keep property owners informed. In Galveston, historic district zoning resulted in increased property values as residents, once hesitant to invest money in homes located in a declining neighborhood, completed necessary home repairs and painted exteriors. GHF


also reported that historical districting contributed to an “intangible and hard to label” result — enhanced “cohesiveness of the neighborhood” — that improved the quality of life and helped lure young families to the area. These groups, while not directly part of GHF, advocated the same preservation ethic; and as the Foundation evolved in the mid-1970s and took a more active role in residential development, connections between them strengthened.

In 1973 Evangeline Wharton began what became a nine-year term as Vice-President of Programs, and for most of her term, she worked full-time in this volunteer position. Wharton provided the impetus to found Dicken’s Evening on the Strand in December 1974, and in May 1975 she organized the first Historic Homes Tour. She conceived of the first tour as an event held in conjunction with the city’s annual Oleander Festival on Saturday, May 10, and Sunday, May 11, and ticket prices allowed for entry to nine homes on Saturday and five different homes on Sunday. Homes Tour visitors enjoyed free refreshments in the Ashton Villa Ballroom, a 20-page illustrated tour program, and transportation to all tour sites on a shuttle bus. Approximately 2,000 people toured the open homes and GHF raised approximately $5,000 for renovations to the Ashton Villa Ballroom. Although all homes on the tour were built between 1850 and

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1900, they demonstrate the different styles and periods of Galveston architecture. They also represented different stages of restoration. The event showcased residential preservation in a way that allowed individual homeowners to show-off their restoration work, provided inspiration to existing and potential property owners, and revealed to visitors Galveston's preservation ethic.

The Historic Homes Tour attendance, fundraising, and general scope grew each year. The 1976 tour featured nine homes and raised $7000 for GHF operations and $2000 for the Elissa. GHF eliminated the coordinated shuttle bus but the illustrated program continued to be a take-away reminder of the restoration success on the island. In 1977 GHF selected twelve homes for the tour but opened six different houses each day to encourage Houston and other out-of-town tourists to spend the weekend on the island.

The event required massive amounts of volunteer work, helped mobilize the membership for a common project, and demonstrated to visitors the dedication of Galveston's residents to GHF. On tour days, hundreds of volunteers staffed ticket tables, directed parking, and guided guests through the homes. Without the support of so many volunteers, the tour could not have operated on such a large scale or expanded to two full weekends as it did in 1984. To this day, the Historic Homes Tour continues to be one of the Foundation's most successful events.


The Historic Homes Tour and the residential historic districts helped bring attention to the treasures of Galveston's neighborhoods. As the city and GHF focused more attention on the revitalization of the whole city, they turned their attention to the blighted but historic residential areas. The Foundation was dedicated to "mak[ing] a major contribution to the long-term, quality development of Galveston" and believed strongly that "the development of the unique and beautiful residential historical areas will aid in reversing the present trend of middle-class families moving away from the island." To begin this work, GHF needed to complete basic research to assess the neighborhoods and establish priorities for residential restoration. In the late 1960s James Garner worked for several years on documenting approximately 850 of Galveston's structures for the Historic American Buildings Survey. However, he had concentrated his efforts in the area north of Broadway and east of Rosenberg. GHF believed that the survey work completed by Garner needed to be revised, updated, and expanded. They turned to the city and the federal fund's available to Galveston through Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954. The city allocated the funds and GHF contracted preservation consultant Ellen Beasley to head the project. By December 1974 she completed the first phase, which included analyzing the past survey work, developing a formal process for


80 Peter Brink to Joe Nadon, "Comprehensive Historical Survey of Galveston," April 10, 1974, Box 6, GHF Records; Ellen Beasley, Untitled Statement, August 11, 1975, Box 7, GHF Records.
the collection of data, and updating the original survey work in the area between 6th and 45th Streets.\textsuperscript{81}

Several months into Beasley's survey, the Department of Housing and Urban Development in conjunction with the National Endowment of the Arts awarded the city a grant to carry out a pilot study "to recommend ways in which neighborhood preservation and revitalization of both existing residential and commercial historical areas can be enhanced."\textsuperscript{82} She was contracted again to coordinate the project, which focused primarily on "the ways in which historic districts and historic zoning influence and affect their neighborhoods."\textsuperscript{83} Beasley also continued her work on the historic survey of the island and utilized a corps of volunteers to assist her with data collection. She submitted applications to list structures on the National Register and submitted appropriate data for the Historic American Buildings Survey. As her work progressed and she continued to document the city, the funding for her contract shifted to various sources including the City Council, federal funds from Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and the Community Development Act of 1977.\textsuperscript{84} The city of Galveston also used HUD's

\textsuperscript{81} Peter Brink to Joe Nadon, "Comprehensive Historical Survey of Galveston," April 10, 1974; Ellen Beasley, Untitled Statement, August 11, 1975; Employment Contract between GHF and Ellen Beasley, September 18, 1974, Box 6, GHF Records.


\textsuperscript{83} Ellen Beasley, Christopher J. Brown, and Rick P. Fisher, "Neighborhood Conservation Study," June 1, 1976, Box 8, GHF Admin Records.

Community Development funds to demolish abandoned, unsound houses and buildings determined unsalvageable. GHF reviewed the properties on the city’s demolition schedule and used Beasley’s expertise to make recommendations in cases where the structures could be rehabilitated. Beasley’s work provided GHF (and Galveston’s city planners) with critical information on its historic resources and helped GHF better accomplish their goals for Galveston’s overall preservation makeover. It also provided the basis for the development of GHF’s residential program department.  

GHF hired a full-time residential director in 1979 and formally began its residential program. Early in the year, an anonymous donor pledged up to $20,000 per year for two years to hire “a staffperson to work with residents, neighborhood associations, the City, and others in developing goals and a strategy for the preservation and enhancement of residential historical areas.” By July the Foundation offered the position of residential director to Steve Malkin, and by September the residential staff expanded to include rehabilitation advisor Gwen Marcus. The spirit of preservation had inspired many like-minded residents to spruce up their homes, and the two historic district associations actively encouraged exterior renovation; however, it took time for most Galvestonians to realize the potential of residential rehabilitation for profit. Forty-seven percent of Galveston’s housing was built prior to 1939, and in the 1970s Galveston’s neighborhoods had been on the decline for many years. As the city’s neighborhood revitalization movement gained steam and property values began rising,

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85 Peter Brink to Ron Durst, June 11, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin Records; Ron Durst to Peter Brink, August 13, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin Records; Ron Durst to Peter Brink, August 22, 1975, Box 5, GHF Admin Records; “50 Attend Public Hearing, Development Plan Aired,” Galveston Daily News, March 20, 1975; “Development Plan Retaining Part of ‘Project Pride,’” Galveston Daily News, October 19, 1975.
86 GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 6, 1979, GHF Archives.
Galveston’s real estate agents and financial lenders also began to take notice. Despite the visual signs of progress, in the early years restoration was seen more as a hobby; and many property owners were unable financially, unknowledgeable about the process, or simply unwilling to make changes. In addition, renters occupied a large percentage of Galveston’s older homes — in the East End that percentage was as high as 58 percent. Rental residents generally did not make improvements on property they did not own, and landlords often refused to conduct renovations without raising rents.88

Simply promoting the benefits of restoration and informing residents of the available financial and educational services comprised a large part of Malkin and Marcus’s job. They offered free advice to all homeowners interested in rehabilitation and encouraged Galvestonians to call. They made suggestions for simple, commonsense changes and assisted with finding solutions for larger structural problems. Malkin and Marcus particularly stressed the significance of performing simple maintenance such as fresh paint, repaired fences, and mowed yards as a way to improve the condition of the neighborhood. They defined “good” rehabilitation plainly as “making a house—your house—as attractive and livable as possible without destroying its original character,” and stressed, “While large restorations are important in order to set standards, good, sensible rehabilitation will make a quicker, more visible difference in the city’s neighborhoods and help to recapture the pride and spirit of the community.”89

Encouraging lower socioeconomic residents to invest in their homes was a challenge, but


financial assistance was available from the city. Galveston provided low-interest home-improvement loans to middle- and low-income property owners, and according to housing director, Ralph Cagnola, the city was a “very liberal lender.”\textsuperscript{90} GHF worked to bring the funding sources to the attention of those in need.

In March 1980 the residential program received a large boost with the award of a $200,000 grant from the Moody Foundation. A group of GHF and city leaders and staff traveled to Savannah in February 1980 for an intensive workshop on their neighborhood rehabilitation program, and Ed Protz, grants manager of the Moody Foundation, accompanied the team. Lee Adler of Savannah had been a longtime supporter and consultant for GHF’s projects, and with the large grant from the Foundation, GHF enlisted the assistance of Adler and Arthur Ziegler of Pittsburg in devising an overall residential plan. Specifically, GHF sought to “[establish] a new comprehensive program to extend the Foundation’s expertise in historic preservation to the historic residential areas of island in order to save, revitalize and redevelop the island’s historical neighborhoods into vital living areas with new quality of life.” The Foundation also agreed “to provide a full range of services designed to establish and maintain a new quality of life in the deteriorating neighborhoods that will attract young and middle class families back to the Island.”\textsuperscript{91} Revitalized residential districts benefited the city in numerous ways, not only by making neighborhoods more attractive but also by stabilizing property values and the tax base. Ugly, dilapidated neighborhoods detracted from the success on the Strand, and GHF and the Moody Foundation understood that “it


\textsuperscript{91} Peter Brink to Ed Protz, April 23, 1980, Box 16, GHF Admin Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 1, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 22, 1980, GHF Archives.
is essential to make historic preservation a reality where people live if support is to be maintained over a long period of time."92 For the island to have a true physical, economic, and cultural transformation, the residential areas needed attention, and with the Moody Foundation’s support, GHF was ready to face the challenge.

With the departure of Malkin in June 1980, Gwen Marcus assumed the role of residential director and inherited several developing projects for 1980. In January 1980 the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund donated $8,500 for the implantation of a free paint program. A simple fresh paint job for many of the island’s older cottages had the potential to make a dramatic visual impact on a neighborhood, but the cost was out of reach for many residents. More than seventy families applied for the program, and in the late summer and fall of 1980, thirty houses received new paint. The selection committee gave preference to older, small to medium-sized houses and low- to moderate-income families. Grantees painted their homes themselves using colors mutually agreed upon by GHF. GHF also assisted the grantees with identifying necessary minor repairs to their home’s exterior. GHF residential advisors helped those applicants who required more significant repairs to find economical rehabilitation solutions and sometimes financial assistance through city grant and loan programs. The 1980 Paint Partnership Program was a success, and the following year the Foundation received money from the city’s Community Development Block Grant and the Kempner Fund to paint sixty houses. GHF continued to expand the popular program each year, and by 1985, the foundation had supplied paint to 250 homes. In 1988 GHF expanded the program again to include a

92 Peter Brink, Albert Shannon, and Gwen Marcus to Charles D. Milby, George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation, December 21, 1983, Development Files, GHF Archives; Peter Brink to Ed Protz, April 23, 1980, Box 16, GHF Admin Records; Peter Brink to Mary Moody Northern, Robert L. Moody, and Shearn Moody, Jr., January 21, 1986, Development Files, GHF Archives.
volunteer painting crew labeled “Paint Pals” to assist elderly or handicapped homeowners. These painting programs exist to this day and continue to be a popular service for the community.93

In the summer of 1980 the Foundation began taking steps toward another of its residential goals, the rehabilitation of a Demonstration House. GHF envisioned purchasing a ramshackle, vacant house in a neighborhood targeted for renewal and renovating it as a community project. The demonstration house project satisfied two of GHF’s overall residential goals, “to stimulate reinvestment and rehabilitation in the surrounding neighborhood” and “to educate residents on proper rehabilitation techniques.”94 The Foundation purchased a three bedroom, one bath home built in 1911-1912 at 1527 Avenue M in January 1981 for $25,000. Partnered with the League of Women Voters and the Galveston College’s Department of Continuing Education, the Foundation planned to rehabilitate the house through a fourteen-week training class, May 28 through August 27, 1981. The course, “From Our House to Yours,” covered specific self-improvement topics such as demolition, roofing, electrical, plumbing, sheetrock, and exterior finishes. It also provided instruction in selecting a house to purchase, finding financing, and planning a restoration. Fifty students took the course and assisted with

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94 “The Galveston Historical Foundation Residential Program” part of Peter Brink, Albert Shannon, and Gwen Marcus to Charels D. Milby, George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation, December 21, 1981, Development Files, GHF Archives; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, August 26, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, October 28, 1980, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, November 25, 1980, GHF Archives.
small restoration projects. Contractors completed the "heavy work" on the house. When
the home at the corner of Avenue M and 16th Street was rehabilitated, GHF held an open
house that revealed to several hundred visitors "how a modest home can be transformed
into a historical experience." The foundation used some donated materials and labor
but completed the house at a cost of $45 per square foot. In all, $67,500 was spent on the
purchase and rehabilitation of the house and $5,200 on the educational program. In
May 1982, the Foundation found a buyer for the restored house when it was featured on
the annual Historic Homes Tour and recouped most of its investment through the
purchase.

With the success of the Paint Partnership Program, the Demonstration House, and
GHF's restoration advisor programs, in 1982 the Foundation elected to extend its
residential program with the opening of a Salvage Warehouse and the establishment of a
Residential Revolving Fund. The Salvage Warehouse opened under the guidance of
rehabilitation advisor Mac McConnell. Its purpose was simple, to collect hard-to-find
building items such as old but architecturally significant doors, windows, shutters, and
columns and sell them to Galvestonians to use in their restoration projects. The
warehouse became a success and moved to its present location in the restored Sealy

"GHF project aims to revive older neighborhoods," Galveston Daily News, January 25, 1981; GHF
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 24, 1981; GHF Archives; Margie Cosgrove, "GHF
Advisor: From Our House To Yours, GHF's Demonstration Project," InBetween, May 1981, 22-23; GHF
Annual Membership Meeting Minutes, July 9, 1981; GHF Board of Director Meeting Minutes, November
24, 1981, GHF Archives.
96 Herman, "Modest home becomes historical experience"; GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes,
November 24, 1981, GHF Archive.
97 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, April 27, 1982, GHF Archives; GHF Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes, May 25, 1982, GHF Archives; "GHF sells house renovated as educational project for
Garage at 910 23rd Street in 2000. Brink and GHF leaders discussed the idea for a Residential Revolving Fund several years before the Foundation felt comfortable embarking on the project. In 1982 the time seemed right. GHF leaders sought to utilize the enthusiasm generated by the Demonstration House and the Paint Partnership Program to expand their community rehabilitation efforts to save individual houses threatened by decay or demolition. In order to maximize the results visually, GHF decided to focus initially on a target “Demonstration Area.” Leaders selected the blocks between 29th to 34th Streets along Avenue M, an area consisting of “small but architecturally interesting Galveston vernacular cottages.” Several residents from this area utilized the Paint Partnership Program, and GHF believed that these Galvestonians were excited about the prospect of revitalization. The Residential Revolving Fund was established using funds from the Residential Programs budget, and in December 1982 GHF made an offer on a condemned, early Greek Revival-style cottage at 1220 34th Street. They intended to purchase the house, stabilize it, and sell it, with deed restrictions requiring rehabilitation, to a restoration-minded Galvestonian. The Foundation believed that like the Demonstration House, this house could “be used as a foothold in the neighborhood — a way gaining the interest and support of the surrounding residents.”

Progress in the Demonstration Area took time. GHF renovated the house at 1220 34th Street in

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collaboration with the City’s Housing Development Division and sold it in 1984 to an area resident. By the time of this sale, GHF had purchased and begun rehabilitation on three additional houses in the area and had also instituted a Mini-Grant Program to assist low- to moderate-income homeowners save significant exterior architectural features.  

The Residential Revolving Fund received financing from the Moody Foundation to continue its work throughout the 1980s. By 1987 GHF had purchased, renewed, and resold eight houses. The Foundation was working also to save two larger historically significant Galveston homes, the 1891 Henry Beissner House, a National Register property at 2818 Ball, and the 1886 John L. Darragh House, the structure featured on the cover of Howard Barnstone’s *The Galveston That Was.*

In the early 1980s as GHF began shifting resources to residential programs, the Foundation reopened the Samuel May Williams House as a historic house museum. Since the initial opening in 1959, the Williams house hosted a series of holiday parties, meetings, events, and historical tourists, but as the Foundation reported to the City Planning department in 1975, “the house has never been fully restored and furnished so that it could draw visitors sufficient to support it.” When Brink arrived on the island in 1973, the Williams House needed rehabilitation and the completion of critical repairs. Rental income from Ellen Beasley’s tenancy provided the funds to fix plumbing and

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104 Grant Application for City Development Funds, December 14, 1976, Box 9, GHF Admin Records.
other essential maintenance projects, but the house demanded more attention.\textsuperscript{105} Although GHF’s leadership was occupied with the Strand restoration, finishing Ashton Villa, and the beginnings of the \textit{Elissa} project, the Foundation applied for and received a $15,000 matching grant from the Texas Historical Commission in early 1976 to restore the Williams House. GHF sought to renovate the first floor of the house, replace exterior rotted wood on the structure’s siding, trim, and shutters, replaster the exposed brick, repair doors and windows, and refinish the interior, in addition to replacing the electrical system. The Foundation also sought to add two restrooms, improve the kitchen facilities, and transform the second floor into a rental apartment. The Austin architectural firm of Bell, Klein and Hoffman worked with the Foundation to draft the restoration plans and fulfill GHF’s goal for the Williams house: “that the House be self-sustaining as an attractive place for tourists to visit and the members of the Foundation to work and meet.”\textsuperscript{106} The work would rehabilitate the house but not structurally alter the post-1900 modifications, including the additions by the Phillip Crosby Tucker family. Initially, GHF estimated the work to cost $42,000, but by January 1977 the budget expanded to $55,000 and by February 1977 to $81,450. The city of Galveston awarded $15,000 in Community Development Block Grant Funds towards the project in late 1976/early 1977, and by that time the Foundation had collected $5,000 in small donations as well.\textsuperscript{107}


When the Williams House Committee, chaired by Tim Thompson, began making plans to work on the house, it did not believe that enough evidence existed to document how the house looked when originally built in 1839 or at the time of Williams’ death in 1858. The Foundation requested construction bids and even negotiated a construction contract in June 1977. By October the Committee decided to investigate alternate renovation plans that would return the structure to its nineteenth-century state. GHF contracted with Building Conservation Technology to conduct the architectural and historical research necessary. BCT completed the report in August 1978, but work to finalize the plans with the consulting architect Graham Luhn continued. The final plans consisted of two phases of work and included complete reconstruction of the cupola and related stairway that burned in the 1890s, missing walls, and the dormers. At $403,578, the projected cost of a fully authentic restoration was almost ten times more than the initial estimate, but GHF “[knew] of no restoration in Texas that has been undertaken with this degree of research and care.” This restoration would return the house structurally and stylistically to how it looked the year Samuel May Williams died, 1858. If completed correctly, the Samuel May Williams House restoration would be a major

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108 GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 19, 1977, Box 11, GHF Admin Records; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, June 9, 1977, GHF Archives; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, October 3, 1977, Box 12, GHF Admin Records.
restoration project. In 1978 and 1979, however, it only received a sliver of attention from GHF’s leadership.\footnote{Thompson and Brink to Protz, November 21, 1979; “Restoration of Williams House to be Realized,” \textit{Galveston Daily News}, March 4, 1979; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, March 13, 1979, GHF Archives; Tim Thompson, “Report to the Galveston Historical Foundation Committee,” March 13, 1979, GHF Archives.}

In March 1979 Williams House Committee chair, Tim Thompson, brought the situation to the attention of the Foundation’s Executive Committee. The cost for a complete restoration was very high, and Thompson estimated that expenses for at least the first five years would significantly exceed income. As the Williams House restoration grew in scope, Thompson felt more and more that the committee was “inadequate to deal with a financial problem of this scale and has other serious handicaps that make it less capable than was the Ashton Villa Committee at the equivalent point.”\footnote{Thompson, “Report to the Galveston Historical Foundation Committee,” March 13, 1979.}

He also felt, “The general interest of the main membership of the Foundation is not the Williams House, I do not complain, but must recognize that response to many appeals for help on this project has been very disappointing.”\footnote{Ibid.} The project was in crisis, and GHF appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to review the situation and determine how best to proceed. The committee included GHF’s top leaders and staff members such as Mike Doherty, Judy Schiebel, Paul Gaido, Sally Wallace, Robert Lynch, Steve Malkin, Burke Evans, and Thompson. Also attending the meeting were Brink, architect Luhn, and Evangeline Wharton. They reconsidered the comprehensive two-phased restoration plan and considered simply completing necessary repairs to stabilize the structure. They also discussed carrying out the restoration in stages as funds became available and even the idea of “[expending] existing grant and matching funds on restoration or conservation
and then lease or sell house with deed restrictions for private residence." Committee members were generally divided between restoration and conservation plans, and several—including Evangeline Wharton, Peter Brink, and Burke Evans—believed strongly that the full restoration needed to be completed in part because “if conservation was carried out now, the Foundation would never get around to restoration.” Ultimately the Ad Hoc Committee recommended doing the full restoration in steps as the money became available. GHF’s Executive Committee concurred and agreed to a budget of $110,000 for the first phase. They also formally asserted for the record, “that GHF remains committed as a final goal to the total restoration of the Williams House.” To streamline decisions and counter the inefficiency of the Williams House Committee, the Executive Committee agreed to empower Thompson, Brink, Doherty, and Malkin to make decisions related to “the exact work to be done and selection of the contractor based on public bidding.” The Foundation signed a contract with Gautier Remodeling and Restoration, and work on the first phase of rehabilitation began in June. This work included repairs to the roof, porches, gutters, and shutters, repainting the exterior of the house, and renovating the downstairs rooms. Gautier Remodeling and Restoration expected to finish this work in November 1979.

With the project underway, Thompson and Brink needed to resolve the lack of funding. By November 1979 with the work on the first phase progressing and the budget for this stage expanded to $179,578, approximately $60,000 more than agreed to in April,

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113 GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 3, 1979, GHF Archives; Minutes of a Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee Appointed by the Executive Committee of the Galveston Historical Foundation, March 22, 1979, GHF Archives.
114 Minutes of a Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee, March 22, 1979.
115 GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 3, 1979, GHF Archives.
116 Ibid.
117 “First Phase of Restoration of Williams House is Begun,” Galveston Daily News, June 26, 1979; GHF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, June 26, 1979, GHF Archives.
the Foundation had secured $102,000 in funding. The Texas Historical Commission
granted $47,000, the City’s Community Development program, the Rockwell Fund, and
the Imperial Sugar Company each gave $15,000, and the Brown Foundation allocated
$10,000. GHF turned to their biggest sponsors, the Moody Foundation for $175,000.
The Moody Foundation approved the entire request, leaving an additional $126,500 to be
raised. With the influx of cash and the completion of the first phase of work in 1980,
GHF did not hesitate to begin the more ambitious phase two. In this phase, the cupola,
breezeway, and dormers would be reconstructed, the house appropriately furnished in
nineteenth-century style, and the second floor converted into an apartment. Again, as the
plans finalized and the work progressed, the budget increased significantly. By October
1980 when Thompson updated the Board of Directors on the restoration progress, he
estimated additional funds of $260,000 would be needed to complete the restoration,
produce a major audio-visual presentation, and provide for the first year of operating
funds. The work on the house continued throughout 1981, but the Foundation faced a
cash flow problem. The Board of Directors pursued a $200,000 line of credit in late 1981
to finish the project, and by April 1982, $115,000 had been borrowed. Concerned about
the growing debt load and with the physical structural restoration work nearing
completion, GHF decided in the spring of 1982 to halt all other plans for the Williams
House until additional funds could be raised. GHF seemed focused on other projects,
including the completion of the Elissa and the development of the Residential Programs
division. The Williams House restoration repeatedly lost — or perhaps never gained —
the enthusiasm of GHF’s leadership and general membership, and this lack of dedication

118 Thompson and Brink to Protz, November 21, 1979; GHF Board of Directors Meeting, January 9, 1980,
GHF Archives;
119 GHF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, October 28, 1980, GHF Archives.
delayed the progress of the project. The completion date continued to be pushed back, and it was not until mid-1983 that the work needed to complete the restoration and reopen the house as a museum restarted.\(^{120}\)

In 1983 GHF dedicated itself to finally completing the Williams House. Brink and Thompson presented an update on the house at the March 1983 meeting of the Board of Directors and announced the receipt of a $50,000 challenge grant from the Kempner Fund. The Rockwell Fund had pledged $10,000 in January and Cecile Kempner donated $5,000 in February. With this fresh infusion of money and the fact that the house had been effectively closed since 1975, Thompson and Brink proposed that the Foundation pursue the conclusion of the restoration and finally reopen the house for tours. The Board agreed.\(^{121}\) GHF took another large step towards committing to the Williams House by hiring Ann Ferguson, former director of the Strand Visitors Center, as house administrator in the summer of 1983. She helped coordinate the final selection of furnishings, the interpretation plan, and final restoration work. She also worked with Gordon Blocker to produce an audio-visual program for visitors. Funded through a $35,000 grant from the Meadows Foundation of Dallas, the ten minute audio-visual program would introduce visitors to the life of Samuel May Williams, the Texas Revolution, and mid-nineteenth century Galveston.\(^{122}\) With professional staff assistance and funding, the Williams House restoration neared completion.\(^{123}\)


The Foundation scheduled the dedication for February 26, 1984, and the grand opening on March 2, 1984. The dedicated members and supporters of the Williams House, many of whom had donated time and money to the restoration effort, attended the dedication ceremony on the twenty-sixth. The official public opening on Texas Independence Day was a larger affair. The date selected emphasized the connection between Texas’s struggle and Williams’ role in financing the purchase of army supplies, ammunition and also the first ships of the Texas navy. At the March 2nd event Texana journalist Ray Miller spoke, and the crowd was treated to a Samuel May Williams impersonator. Visitors to the house on the first few days enjoyed free admission and attendance averaged one hundred people per day. In addition to a state-of-the-art audio-visual presentation, guests toured the downstairs rooms of the house, which GHF furnished primarily with reproductions. The house did feature a recliner from the 1840s, reupholstered in black horsehair, used by Williams and an upright German piano that stayed with the house after Williams’ heirs sold the home to the Phillip C. Tucker family. The house’s simple details, including the winding staircase, reveal Williams’ unassuming aesthetic and stressed the beauty of the plain. In addition to touring the rooms on the first floor, visitors could also enjoy an unobstructed view of the island and the Gulf from the reconstructed cupola. When the house formally opened to the public in 1984, the Foundation claimed success.
The Williams House project required much more money and volunteer leadership than initially intended; however, because its initial preservation provided the impetus for the founding of GHF, it was not a project that the Foundation could completely abandon. Unfortunately, despite the achievement of the 1980s restoration, the Foundation’s membership (and Galveston’s tourists) continued to have an inconsistent and inattentive relationship to the house. In September 2007, after years of weekend-only tours and miniscule attendance, the Foundation closed the Williams House. GHF worked with the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers to transform the property from a historic house museum into a livable modern home that the Foundation planned to lease to a “resident curator.”

The Strand revitalization project brought Peter Brink to Galveston and energized the Galveston Historical Foundation, but GHF’s non-Strand projects played a critical role in the organization’s growth and transformation into a well-respected, nationally known historic preservation non-profit. For Galveston’s historic preservation movement to succeed and generate the cultural and historical tourism that would infuse the local economy, the city needed to offer more than a few city blocks of restored commercial
buildings. A delicate balance of downtown residents, cultural arts attractions, unique shopping opportunities, restaurants, businesses, museums, and other attractions was required. The restoration of Ashton Villa and its opening as a traditional historic house museum complete with docent tour guides, a gift shop, and space for special events filled the niche for historical tourists looking to visit a grand Galveston mansion from the island’s nineteenth-century heyday. The saving of the Elissa and its maritime restoration provided the much-needed connection to Galveston’s past as a major southern port and allowed for a modern linkage to the physical waterfront. This project challenged the limits of the Foundation’s volunteer structure and its fundraising capabilities, but the magnitude of this multi-million dollar project helped push GHF onto the national maritime preservation movement.

Brink and GHF’s leadership realized that even with a successful Strand, Ashton Villa, and even a tall sailing ship, these achievements would be significantly devalued by deteriorating residential neighborhoods. GHF took action when it felt institutionally comfortable expanding its program to include residential restoration assistance. This division has dramatically aided the overall revitalization of the island. Finally, the Foundation could not abandon its own history and the house that rallied dedicated islanders to organize in 1954 as the Galveston Historical Foundation. Despite the general disinterest of a membership seduced by the excitement of the Strand, the Elissa, and almost any other GHF program, the Samuel May Williams House received a proper restoration and re-opened as a historic house museum. These restoration projects worked together with the Strand revitalization to make a historic Galveston a reality. By the mid-
1980s GHF was at its institutional peak and its success could be visibly recognized by all — on and off the Strand.
Epilogue

The historic preservation movement in Galveston continues to flourish and evolve as the island’s needs change. The overall success of the Galveston Historical Foundation is truly phenomenal. In the fall of 2006 recently departed GHF executive director Marsh Davis utilized an article in the Foundation’s publication, *Galveston Preservation News*, to reflect on his four years in Galveston. He began:

One of the wonderful things about the historic preservation movement in America is its diversity and how organizations vary from one community to the next. Preservation organizations, like Galveston Historical Foundation, are not cast from a single mold. There is no national model that dictates the size, scope and structure of organizations. Rather, we are on our own to create and build organizations, limited only by the breadth of our vision and of course, our ability to fund that vision.

The result is a vibrant movement that allows organizations to reflect the character of their respective communities and their communities’ commitment to historic preservation. With GHF, Galveston — as it does in so many ways — defies all odds as it sustains one of the nation’s largest and most dynamic preservation organizations whose impact and presence in the community, through time and into the present, are profound and positive.¹

Galvestonians certainly dreamed big and, in general, they found the funding to create the institution that best served their island community. In fact, Davis believes, “GHF has been at its best when it stretches, expanding it reach and taking risks.”² Anne Ammons Brindley dreamed big when she helped found GHF and saved the Samuel May Williams house in 1954. The five members of the Junta and the Moody Foundation dreamed big

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² Ibid.
when they established the revolving fund for the Strand and hired Peter Brink in 1973. Brink, Michael Creamer, and Paulie Gaido certainly dreamed big when they decided to push for the restoration of the *Elissa* in the late 1970s. The Foundation also dreamed big in the 1980s with the expansion of its residential programs. Not all of GHF’s dreams were realized, including the development of an extensive fisherman’s wharf at Pier 19 or the preservation of the Ufford Building, but these struggles did not deter the Foundation from pursuing an ambitious vision.

GHF’s early history can be defined by a dedication to volunteerism and the idea of looking to the past to create a future. The founders of the Foundation’s nineteenth-century predecessor organizations understood the significance of their island city and they did what they could to preserve the remnants of their past. Their story reveals the long-standing dedication of Galvestonians to history and places the work of the Foundation in a larger historical context. Paradoxically, the greatest gift left by this generation is not the manuscript and book collection carefully preserved in the Rosenberg Library’s Galveston and Texas History Center but it is their built environment — a collection of handsomely constructed commercial buildings and distinctive residential neighborhoods. This physical landscape is what islanders today struggle so hard to preserve, and it is what has allowed the island to persevere in the late twentieth century.

The single most defining moment in GHF’s history after the arrival of Peter Brink in 1973 was his departure in 1989. After sixteen years, Brink accepted the position of vice-president for preservation programs, services and information for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Brink told the *Galveston Daily News* at the time, “There are only two or three jobs in America that would have lured me away from the Galveston
Historical Foundation and this is one of them." The time Brink spent guiding the Foundation can be considered as the golden age of historic preservation on the island — extensive project funding was available, the volunteers were eager, and the leadership was driven and motivated. Brink’s unique personality and professional experience combined to make him a perfect fit for the island, and he was able to guide the Foundation to truly remarkable achievements. Longtime GHF supporter and past president, Shrub Kempner told the Daily News in 1989, “Peter’s contribution here was important because of the impetus and organization that he has given. He raised everybody’s sights about what was possible and helped the rest of us conceive what this city could be. People don’t like to let go of such people. He has real brains and a solid capacity to work with people politically. In Washington, he will be able to help Galveston.”

Today, almost twenty years after his departure, he is still considered a hero and his name is revered around town. Brink left Galveston at a time when the Foundation had successfully accomplished many of its preservation goals. He trusted that the preservation movement would continue to flourish and the Foundation would continue to evolve — and it has.

The Galveston Historical Foundation celebrated fifty-four years of institutional history in 2008. It has had three executive directors since Brink’s departure: Betty Massey (1990 - 2000), Marsh Davis (2002 - 2006), and Dwayne Jones (since 2006). GHF remains a leader in the community-based preservation movement, and all of its achievements and struggles cannot be discussed within the confines of a single

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4 Ibid.
dissertation (or at least not this dissertation). I can, however, briefly bring the readers up-to-date on its larger projects, triumphs, and disappointments.

The Strand revitalization project continued to succeed in the 1980s. By 1989 the Foundation had used the revolving fund to ensure the restoration of twenty buildings in the Strand historic area. The district boasted at least seventy-five businesses, and the restoration effort had spread to surrounding streets including Mechanic and Post Office. In 1986 the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council completed their restoration of the 1894 Grand Opera House. Although this was not an official GHF project, its opening contributed to the district’s overall success. In 1989 when Brink departed the island, he considered the revitalization of the Strand his proudest achievement, and he stated to the Galveston Daily News, “That’s what I came to Galveston to do in 1973.”

Developer George Mitchell expanded his involvement in the Strand the 1980s and the results had a dramatic effect. In 1981 Mitchell and his wife, Cynthia, purchased one of the largest buildings in the Strand district, the Leon & H. Blum Building at 2300 Mechanic Street. Following a four-year rehabilitation, the Mitchells opened the Tremont House, a 124-room hotel, in the structure that once housed one of the largest dry goods wholesalers in nineteenth-century Texas. The Mitchells brilliantly timed the grand opening of the hotel with the resurrection of Galveston’s mardi gras celebration. For eighty years prior to World War II, Galveston celebrated mardi gras, and Mitchell recognized the opportunity to bring the festive tradition back to the island in a way that not only attracted tourists but also raised money for the island’s cultural causes, including

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GHF. Over the past thirty years the Mitchells have invested over $125 million in preserving and rehabilitation historic properties in the Strand district. They purchased and restored fifteen buildings in the Strand area and also own the historic Hotel Galvez. The Mitchells continue to support GHF and its cause through continued stewardship of their historic properties along with the issuance of challenge grants, publicity, and general support. In 2008 Peter Brink told Executive Traveler magazine, “The most amazing thing about George, is that we’d walk the Strand and he would pick up every scrap of trash he saw and put it into a trash barrel. Nothing was too small for him to do. Here was this billionaire using his bare hands to help make the Strand look the way he wanted it to look.” Mitchell is willing to do what is necessary to make the Strand a success, and it is certainly true that Galveston would be a different place without his influence.

In the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, the Strand, despite continuing as a successful tourist attraction, has struggled. The Strand envisioned by GHF in the 1970s included art galleries, interesting shops, restaurants, businesses, and tenants. It did not include chain stores/restaurants or shops selling cheap plastic tchotchkeys and t-shirts. Maintaining standards is one of the most difficult challenges of sustaining a historical district, and historic structures once carefully restored need continual care and restoration to maintain their first-rate condition. In 1989 Brink and GHF were already fighting that battle, he told the Galveston Daily News: “We must continually fight to keep the quality good, to keep it with a strong appearance and good quality. We’re under continual pressure to back down and sell T-shirts. We’re still trying to stay on the uphill side, but

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there are spots that are starting to look bad.” Ultimately, the dreaded T-shirt and curio shop infiltrated the Strand; however, the tourists continued to arrive.

GHF left its headquarters in the western section of the Hendley Building in 1999 for the recently renovated 1861 U.S. Custom House. The U.S. General Services Administration contacted GHF in 1997 about possible uses for the largely vacant structure. After almost twenty years in the Hendley Building, GHF had outgrown its offices on the Strand. In 1998 the Foundation signed a sixty-year lease and embarked on a six-month restoration project. The Custom House gave GHF plenty of space for offices, meetings, and allowed for the opening of a Preservation Resource Center (PRC) where visitors could learn about the island’s architectural and cultural treasures. The PRC also provided historic property research for landowners and served as a general clearinghouse for GHF’s ever expanding residential programs. GHF physically left the Strand in 1999, and four years later its condition became a primary concern once again.8

In 2003 the Foundation received a wake-up call as to the condition of the Strand when executive director Marsh Davis discovered the National Park Service had downgraded the Strand’s status from “little or no threat” to “potentially threatened.” The “potentially threatened” status was established in 2000 during a routine evaluation of all properties with National Historic Landmark status and renewed during the 2002 evaluation, but Davis did not become aware of the status change until May 2003. As reported by the Galveston Daily News, the NPS evaluation commented on the status of

the Strand, "Several buildings showed signs of needing repair and rehabilitation. There is some indication that there is some pressure for new development in the district which could become a threat.”⁹ If the district continued to decline and existing property owners failed to properly maintain their buildings, the Strand could lose its significant designation. Davis recognized that negative changes had occurred on the Strand that “really distract from the quality of The Strand,” and he emphasized, “It distracts from the experience, whether you live here or visit.”¹⁰ GHF Vice-President Bob Brown told his fellow GHF members, “We seem, momentarily, to have gone back to the sixties when nobody cared about the old derelict downtown area; the days before those visionary preservation pioneers turned the Strand around.”¹¹ At roughly the same time as Davis discovered the threat to the Strand’s landmark status, the building at 101 Kempner, built in 1916, was demolished after the owner allowed it to slowly decay. After the building became a danger to the public, the city ordered it destroyed. Neglect had crept into the Strand and the danger of demolition was real. GHF used these two events as a call to action. The Foundation, the Historic Downtown/Strand Partnership, and the Chamber of Commerce appealed to the city government for a crackdown in code enforcement that resulted in owners completing the most basic repairs. GHF also began an assessment of threatened buildings and sought to work with property owners and Strand business owners on the renewal of neglected structures. In late September a NPS architect visited Galveston and, impressed by the quick improvements, upgraded the status to “little or no

¹⁰ Urban, “The Strand’s Landmark Designation in Peril.”
threat." GHF continues to dedicate time to the maintenance of the Strand. In 2005 it renewed its commitment to the downtown by formally partnering with the Historic Downtown Galveston Partnership, an organization founded in 1984 to promote revitalization of the central business district. The Partnership hired Lesley Sommer, former director of GHF’s Preservation Resource Center, as executive director, and charged him with the mission “to promote downtown business . . . and to enhance the experience of residents and visitors to Galveston’s historic Strand and downtown.” Historic preservation is not a “do-it-once” type restoration. Historic structures require maintenance, and GHF is now recommitted to seeing its special project flourish.

The Elissa continues to be a major project for the Foundation. Maintaining a nineteenth-century sailing vessel is expensive and requires the work of a large group of dedicated volunteers. In 1983 the National Trust awarded its Honor Award to the Elissa volunteers in recognition of their restoration efforts. Hurricane Alicia in August 1983 did little damage to the Elissa, and she visited Houston for the first time later that fall. In 1985 she made her first offshore passage, sailing to Corpus Christi as part of a benefit for the Art Museum of South Texas; and in 1986 she traveled to New York City for the Parade of Tall Ships celebrating the Statue of Liberty Centennial. The trip to New York was the second true challenge for the Elissa (the first being her initial restoration). It required thousands of dollars, a volunteer crew willing to be at sea for weeks, and GHF’s full attention. It was a struggle, however, as Patricia Bellis Bixel writes:

Overestimating the impact of Elissa's trip to New York would be difficult. The monetary value of the publicity was calculated in the millions of dollars. Elissa appeared on a full page in USA Today, a crew member was featured in People magazine, and newspapers all along the eastern seaboard recorded the ship's travels. A news crew from NBC's Today show sailed with the ship from Miami to Charleston, and an ABC crew was on board for the parade in New York harbor. Reporters from all the major Houston television stations sailed as crew, as did print journalists from across Texas. . . . The captain, officers, and crew were toasted and honored in every port, asked for autographs, and questioned intensely about the vessel.14

Upon return from New York, David Brink resigned from his position as Director of the Elissa. He continued to work as a consultant, but GHF wanted to utilize the Elissa mainly as a museum-ship docked in Galveston — a mission that contrasted with David Brink's vision that she be a true sailing vessel. She sailed in 1987 to Beaumont and Biloxi, Mississippi, under a charter arrangement with David Brink's new company, Sea Adventures in Learning (S.A.I.L., Inc.) and in 1989 she embarked on a ten-port voyage around the Gulf of Mexico. The trip was termed the "Texas Proud Voyage" and served as a part goodwill trip and part marketing campaign to lure Texas tourists to Galveston. It also coordinated with the groundbreaking of the Foundation's next maritime history project, the Texas Seaport Museum.15

GHF broke ground for the Texas Seaport Museum (TSM) in October 1989 and the museum opened two years later on October 26, 1991. The museum's permanent exhibits educate visitors about Galveston's maritime history and significance as both a port of entry for immigrants and profitable cargo. The TSM allows for additional space to tell the story of the Elissa's restoration and her history as a nineteenth-century sailing

15 Bixel, 67-71.
vessel and provides more permanent office space for her paid staff. The Galveston
Wharves moved its banana-handling operation from Pier 21 in 1989 and the city finally
made plans for a Fisherman's Wharf-type project, complete with a hotel, restaurant and
retail space, and boat marina. Designed by Ford, Powell, and Carson Architects and
financed by a $900,000 Urban Development Action Grant from the Department of
Housing and Urban Development, $2.4 million from city tax reinvestment zone bonds,
and $3 million from George Mitchell and The Woodlands Corporation, Pier 21 opened in
1993. Today the location of the Elissa and the Texas Seaport Museum on the waterfront
amid the Pier 21 development offers tourists the type of maritime experience that Peter
Brink envisioned in the mid-1970s.16

With the development at Pier 21 and the opening of the TSM, debate over the
Elissa's sailing schedule intensified; those who wanted her in Galveston largely won. In
the twenty-first century she does not leave her moorings at Pier 21 very often, but
volunteers take her into the Gulf annually for day sails. Elissa requires a tremendous
amount of volunteer labor and funding to keep her sailable. These volunteers are often
more loyal to the ship than to the Foundation. The high cost of her restoration and sailing
voyages in the 1980s drained the pockets of many of Galveston's supporters, and this
caused tension within the leadership and general membership of the Foundation.
Fortunately, as the Elissa enters her thirtieth year, this discord seems to be on the
decline.17

16 Bixel, 69-77; "Fifty Years of Preservation"; Mitchell Historic Properties, "Pier 21 Buildings,"
http://www.mitchellhistoricproperties.com/#/pier21buildings/; Ellen Beasley and Stephen Fox, Galveston
17 Bixel, 68-82; Marsh Davis, interview with the author, November 2003; Peter Brink, interview with the
author, December 2006; Patricia Bellis Bixel, discussions with the author.
GHF continues to maintain and expand its stewardship of museum and historic properties. Ashton Villa attracts thousands of guests each year, and its ballroom serves as the site for GHF functions and events by members of the community. Visitors continue to see the house on docent-led tours, and in 1993 GHF signed a new twenty-year contract to manage the historic house museum for Galveston’s Park Board of Trustees. The Samuel May Williams House never attracted large numbers of visitors, and in 2007 GHF made the difficult decision to eliminate the regularly scheduled weekend tours and convert it into a livable home for a “resident curator.” The Foundation continues to maintain St. Joseph Church as it has since 1968. The church, leased to GHF by the Galveston-Houston Catholic Archdiocese, is open only for special tours but can be rented for events.

GHF expanded its museum operations significantly in 1984 when the Foundation agreed to take over operation of the Galveston County Historical Museum. In 1972 Mary Moody Northen donated the City National Bank Building, home of Moody National Bank at 2219 Market Street, to Galveston County for use as a county museum. The museum opened in 1976, but its operation was a near constant struggle for the County Commissioners. The Foundation added upstairs exhibition galleries and restored the

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ornate plaster ceiling during its first few years of stewardship and continues to offer traditional historical exhibits for visitors.\textsuperscript{21}

The Foundation supplements its budget by renting out several of its properties for special events, including weddings, parties, and business meetings. Couples can even have their wedding reception on the decks of the \textit{Elissa}.\textsuperscript{22} In 1996 GHF officially leased the Garten Verein Pavilion from the city of Galveston. The tiered dancing pavilion sits on land now known as Kempner Park at 27\textsuperscript{th} Street between Avenues N and O and was constructed in 1880 by the Galveston Garten Verein, a German social organization founded in 1876. When the club disbanded in 1923, Stanley E. Kempner purchased the pavilion and the land surrounding it and donated it to the city. Following a fire, the city renovated the structure in 1981 using funds from the city's Community Development Block Grant and grants from both the Moody Foundation and the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund. GHF spearheaded a second restoration in 1997-1998 when it took over the pavilion; this restoration was funded entirely by the Kempners as part of a gift to Galveston in honor of the Fund’s fiftieth anniversary. The pavilion is a popular rental that is often booked a year in advance and hosts a variety of events — the most curious one being perhaps the ladies badminton club that has played in the Garten Verein three mornings a week since 1945!\textsuperscript{23}

In 2007 GHF finalized a long-term agreement with the Galveston-Houston Catholic Archdiocese for the maintenance and daily operation of the Bishop's Palace at

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1402 Broadway. One of Galveston's best known buildings, the Bishop's Palace was designed by Nicholas J. Clayton and completed in 1892 for Walter Gresham. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Galveston purchased the house in 1923, and as the residence of Bishop Christopher Byrne, it assumed its Bishop's Palace nickname. The diocese opened the house as a historic house museum in 1963, and it became "Galveston's most visited historic attraction." Several years prior to the change in responsibility, GHF and the City of Galveston, under leadership of Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas, teamed with the National Trust for a comprehensive study on the structure's condition. Simply put, they were concerned about the mansion's condition. Architect Joseph Oppermann identified more than $5 million in stabilization and repair work that would guarantee the mansion's survival. In light of the study, the Archdiocese partnered with the city and GHF to work towards a plan to restore and preserve the structure. The Galveston Preservation News reported, "while the Archdiocese was proud of the building and having kept it available to the public for all these years, historic preservation was not the Church's highest calling, and it could not afford the deferred maintenance and structural restoration recommended in a recent report." The Foundation agreed to assume stewardship of the property with the Archdiocese retaining ownership. GHF plans a "complete restoration to the splendor of 1892" and immediately embarked on a fundraising campaign.

If one looks at the history of the Galveston Historical Foundation's work, the Strand project dominated the 1970s, the Elissa dominated the 1980s, and residential programs dominated the 1990s. GHF did not fully embrace a residential preservation

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26 GHF Press Release, "Galveston Historical Foundation to Manage Bishop's Palace."
program until 1979, but this is one of the greatest ways GHF truly enhances the twenty-first century island community. In 1982 GHF established its residential revolving fund to help preserve significant homes, and one of its most noteworthy early purchases was the Darragh House at 519 Church Street in 1986. This landmark home, designed by architect Alfred Muller, was built in 1886 for John L. Darragh. Henry Barnstone prominently featured it on the cover of his book, *The Galveston That Was*, in 1966. At the time GHF purchased the structure, the house had been vacant for years. A fire in 1985 had destroyed its roof, and the current owners were in the process of removing precious architectural details. The size of the house and its poor condition were true challenges to finding prospective buyers; however, GHF was not deterred. The Foundation replaced the roof, rebuilt its distinctive turret, and restored its front gallery porch. GHF featured the restored porch and advertised for the sale of the house during the 1989 Historic Homes Tour. In September 1990 Penny and Bernie Shaffer purchased the house and GHF believed the Darragh House to be saved. At the time executive director, Betty Massey told the *Galveston Daily News*, "The project was a long shot when we took it on. . . . A lot of people said saving the house was impossible, but we set a goal and through perseverance and dedication, we got the job done."

Unfortunately, arsonists struck the property three times that fall, and insurance adjusters and the City of Galveston declared the Darragh House unsalvageable after the last fire. GHF refunded the Shaffers' down payment and part of what they had spent on contractors' fees and reassumed ownership of the property in January 1991. GHF's Board of Directors grudgingly voted to demolish the structure.

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the house. They did choose to restore the elaborate cast-iron fence surrounding the property, and in 1992 the Foundation moved a threatened historic house to one-third of the Darragh property (that house has since been moved again). In 1995 the East End Historic District Association purchased the fence and the property from GHF and converted it into a neighborhood park.

Another house purchased by GHF’s residential revolving fund, the Michael B. Menard house at 1605 33rd Street, met an entirely different end. Built by one of the city’s founders in 1838, the Menard house is the oldest building in Galveston. After it was sold by the Menard heirs in 1880, it was carefully cared for by the Ketchum family until 1977. It then suffered through a partial remodel and was abandoned in the 1980s. In 1992 GHF purchased the decaying structure to save it from demolition by the city and began searching for potential investors. Pat and Fred Burns of Houston purchased the house in 1994, and it underwent a beautiful, comprehensive restoration. The restoration was complete in time for the 1995 Historic Homes Tour when a record 6,500 people toured the house. The Menard House is not used as a primary residence and is instead opened by GHF for weekend tours and is rented for special events. It is a story of successful residential restoration but was not a project to be completed by the average homeowner.

GHF’s residential programs focus their efforts on encouraging Galvestonians of all economic levels to take pride in their historic homes and island heritage. The Foundation spends much of its time on inspiring low- to medium- income homeowners to complete simple projects. In 1990 GHF persuaded the Resolution Trust Corporation to

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28 “Darragh Demise.”
29 Beasley and Fox, 84-5.
donate four dilapidated two-story town-house style homes in the 2000 block of Sealy Avenue. The Foundation nicknamed the houses Rainbow Row, rehabilitated them, and in 1992 sold them to low- to medium- income, first-time homeowners.\(^{31}\) GHF broadened their neighborhood preservation program in 1991 when it began purchasing and restoring cottages along Church Street between 14\(^{th}\) and 15\(^{th}\) Streets in an endeavor nicknamed Operation Church Street. The project was considered complete in 1995, and the City of Galveston installed new sidewalks for the area. As architectural historians Ellen Beasley and Stephen Fox wrote about the project, “Through Operation Church Street, the foundation has reinforced what was perceived as a vulnerable spot in the East End Historic District without altering the character of what was historically a working-class enclave in the genteel East End.”\(^{32}\) GHF persists with this purchase and restoration program today as part of its commitment to affordable housing and continues to assist low- to moderate-income homeowners through Rehabilitation Incentive Grants for exterior repairs up to $5,000, a Code Compliance Assistance Fund that provides up to $7,000 for repairs to bring homes up to city code standard, and the popular Paint Partnership and Paint Pals programs. GHF is making a difference in Galveston’s neighborhoods — one house at a time.\(^{33}\)

\(^{31}\) “Fifty Years of Preservation”; Beasley and Fox 55.

\(^{32}\) Beasley and Fox 84; “Fifty Years of Preservation.”

Just as Marsh Davis wrote in 2006 that there is no “single mold” for preservation organizations, nor is there a singular history. There is, however, a common goal — to preserve and protect our heritage. The history of the Galveston Historical Foundation is only one case study of the national preservation movement. Nevertheless, this history reveals the power of preservation in a local community and shows how a dedication to the past can affect a city’s cultural and physical landscape. As this dissertation comes to an end, in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike, Galveston is faced with a massive rebuilding effort. I am certain that the Galveston Historical Foundation and the spirit of preservation will actively guide the restoration effort and that Galveston will again become the Queen City of the Gulf.
Appendix

Galveston, Texas, ca. 2005

Map from Discover Historic Galveston (Galveston, TX: The Galveston Historical Foundation, 2005).
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