

Galveston's African American Historic Places and Pioneers

A Guidebook



Reedy Chapel

Prepared by the Old Central Cultural Center
and Galveston Historical Foundation's
African American Heritage Committee

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Cover photograph:

The African Methodist Episcopal Church at 20th and Broadway (now Reedy Chapel). On January 1, 1866, the Emancipation Proclamation was read, perhaps for the first time publicly in Texas, at this site.

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Galveston's African American Historic Places and Pioneers

A Guidebook

*History is who we are
and why we are
the way we are.*

David G. McCullough

This tour guide was created to invite you to explore Galveston's rich African American Heritage. The sites, events and people listed will help those interested in learning and sharing with family members the many ways African Americans in Galveston aided in the development of the city, state and nation.

African Americans have played a major role in the growth of Texas for hundreds of years under different flags. Ships from around the world came to Galveston, a major seaport town, to trade goods and auction slaves. According to a census taken in 1848, several hundred slaves resided in Galveston; many worked on the waterfront in the cotton industry. Galveston was an important city for trading goods and relaying information. It was here the slaves of Texas learned of their freedom on June 19, 1865.

A constant source of stability for the African American community has been its churches. Fourteen churches that were organized more than 100 years ago are still in existence and serving the community today. Four of the churches are the first in Texas to be organized for African Americans in their denomination.

Galveston was also the first city in Texas to provide a secondary school and public library for African Americans. Events such as Juneteenth and pioneers such as politician Norris Wright Cuney, world heavyweight champion Jack Johnson and entertainer Barry White all had ties to the Galveston community and will be highlighted in the guide. This 2010 edition also includes brief histories of the Greek-Letter Societies which have for a century been central to Galveston's African American Community.

Churches with More Than 100 Years of History

1. Avenue L Missionary Baptist Church

2612 Avenue L
(409) 762-8795

**Texas' first
African American
Baptist Church.**

An outgrowth of the Colored Baptist Church formed in 1840 as the slave congregation of the First Missionary Baptist Church, the church moved to the Avenue L site in 1855 with the Reverend Israel S. Campbell serving as the pastor. The 1900 Storm destroyed that building. The



Tanner Brothers Contractors and Architects, an African-American firm, constructed the present structure in 1916. Visible on the west side behind the brick church is the wooden church of 1904.

2. West Point Missionary Baptist Church

3009 Avenue M
(409) 762-5642

This church was organized in 1870 as West Point Free Mission Baptist Church with the Reverend E. T. Hall serving as pastor. Services were held in various locations throughout Galveston. The current building was erected in 1916 and completed in 1921 with funds donated by African American longshoremen. The Reverend John C. Calhoun, who served as pastor during this time, was instrumental in getting jobs for longshoremen on Galveston docks.



3. First Union Missionary Baptist Church

1027 Avenue K
(409) 763-4236

Founded in 1870, the First Union Free Mission Baptist Church was organized by a delegation representing the American Baptist Free Mission Society of Boston, an interracial antislavery group. First Union

was the first church organized by the society in Texas. The Reverend Benjamin J. Hall, who served as pastor from 1878 to 1914, earned praise for his efforts to rebuild the sanctuary after the 1900 Storm and for enhancing the church's role as mother church of the Texas State Convention. The present structure was erected in 1955.



4. Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church

3602 Sealy
(409) 762-0088

Mount Olive was organized in 1876 as an extension of Avenue L Missionary Baptist Church, the Reverend I. S. Campbell, pas-

tor. An African-American Church was needed for persons who resided in the western area of the city. The Reverend D. H. Shivers was appointed as temporary pastor. The original structure was destroyed in the 1900 Storm and rebuilt under the pastorate of the Reverend E. M. Wright. The present sanctuary was completed in March, 1969, with the Reverend M. C. Battle serving as pastor.



5. Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church

3215 Broadway
(409) 763-4776

The church was organized in 1883 on the corner of 30th at Avenue I as West Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church. The Reverend Patrick served as pastor and held Sunday services from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. As church growth flourished, property at 32nd and Broadway was purchased and the

present building was erected. The Reverend B. J. Hall was among the early pastors to provide leadership and help the church progress.



6. Saint Luke Missionary Baptist Church

1301 Avenue L
(409) 763-6145

In 1894, 36 members of Union Baptist Church received letters to dismiss them from the church. They started a new church by meeting in homes until a lot with two houses was



obtained at 15th and Avenue N. The name St. Luke was suggested by a Mrs. Bess and received a majority of the votes. The church on 15th and Avenue N was destroyed by the 1900 Storm. The church then moved to 9th and Broadway. The present site was purchased in 1911.

7. Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church

2920 Avenue M½
(409) 762-9855

A band of Christian believers gathered in the year 1889 after realizing the need for more churches in the community. The Reverend Taylor was appointed pastor and the name of the church was accepted. Taylor served only a few months, dur-



ing which time the church members were worshipping in a building located near the beach. The congregation moved from this location to 29th and M½. The beautiful edifice built there was destroyed by the 1900 Storm. The present building was erected in its place.

8. Trinity Missionary Baptist Church (now Bible Way Baptist Church)

1223 32nd Street
(409) 599-1560

The church organized as the Trinity Mission Baptist Church in the 1890s was an extension of the Avenue L Missionary Baptist Church congregation. The church has been at this site since its



inception. It became dormant for a few years, but reopened in 2002 as Bethel Baptist Church.

9. Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

2013 Broadway

(409) 762-2016

Texas' first African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1848 the Methodist Episcopal Church South established an African American church for its slaves. The trustees purchased land at 20th and Broadway and a church was erected. A fire destroyed the church in 1885. In 1886 the church was reorganized by the Reverend M. M. Clark, and the new building, completed in 1888, was turned over to newly freed slaves. The name "Reedy" was taken from the Reverend Houston Reedy, who was Clark's successor. The building is a combination of gothic revival architecture and regional craftsmanship. The masonry of the church was laid by renowned church member Norris Wright Cuney.



10. Saint Paul United Methodist Church

1425 Broadway
(409) 762-6134

This congregation was organized in 1866 through a division of parishioners from the reorganized Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Saint Paul Methodist Episcopal Church congregation purchased property between 8th and 9th Streets on Avenue H (Ball). The first pastor of the new church was the Reverend Samuel Osborn.



According to county records, in 1902, Saint Paul sold its property on Ball Street and purchased the land on 14th and Broadway, where the church is located today. Wesley Tabernacle United Methodist Church emerged from the Saint Paul congregation.

11. Wesley Tabernacle United Methodist Church

902 28th Street
(409) 762-7266

The Reverend Peter Cavanaugh organized the church in 1869 as an independent congregation. Church members met in a one-room house between 38th and 39th on Broadway. As the church grew, the present location was purchased and the house was moved to the site. After losses of church buildings to fire and the 1900 Storm, a one-story building was erected. In 1924 the church was remodeled by raising the building and constructing a new first floor. The new construction gave the building a unique combination of architectural styles.



12. Shiloh African Methodist Episcopal Church

1310 Martin Luther King
Boulevard
(409) 762-3646

In the 1860s, the Methodist Episcopal Bishop was notified that another African Methodist Church was needed in Galveston for people who resided west of 25th Street. In 1870, Peter Burns, Solomon Riley and William Davis, trustees for the congregation that had been meeting in private homes, purchased the land at 1310



29th Street. Church buildings at the site had been destroyed by hurricanes in 1894 and 1900. The present structure was built in 1923 after the former building weakened. In 1971 it became the first African American church in Texas to be awarded a state historical marker.

13. Saint Augustine Episcopal Church

1410 41st Street
(409) 763-4254

Texas' first African American Episcopal Church.

Saint Augustine Episcopal Church was organized in 1884 to minister to black Anglicans from the British West Indies. It is the oldest historically African American parish in the Episcopal



Diocese of Texas. The church was originally located at 22nd and Broadway and moved to the present location in 1940.



14. Holy Rosary Catholic Church

1420 31st Street
(409) 762-9646

Texas' first African-American Catholic Church.

Bishop Nicholas A. Gallagher started the first African American Catholic School in Texas in 1886. However, the church was not organized until December of 1889 when Father Phillip Keller, a native of Germany, was appointed the first resident pastor of Holy Rosary Parish. The original site for the church and other parish buildings was 25th and Avenue L. In 1914 they were all moved to the present location on Avenue N between 30th and 31st Street. The school was closed in 1979 after 81 years of service.

Holy Rosary Catholic Church

After the destruction caused by Hurricane Ike in 2008, the Catholic Archdiocese consolidated Holy Rosary Church with the four other Catholic Churches on Galveston Island on August 14, 2009 under the new parish name of Holy Family Parish. The parish office number is (409) 762-9646.

A Place for Higher Learning



Photo courtesy of the Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas

The 1893 Central High School building, now demolished, was designed by Nicholas Clayton, Galveston's leading architect. The present building on the site was originally an annex to Clayton's building.

15. Site of Central High School, Texas' First African American High School, 1885

2627 Avenue M

Central High School was organized in 1885, thanks to the influence of the Honorable Norris Wright Cuney, an outstanding African American leader. The first high school was located in rented quarters on 16th and Avenue L. In 1893, land was purchased by the Galveston School Board between 26th and 27th Streets on Avenue M and a building designed by the famous Nicholas Clayton was erected. In 1924, a new wing was added to the building on the west side. This addition now houses the Old Central Cultural Center which was organized by Dr. L. A. Morgan, the fourth principal. The final Central High School Building was erected in 1954 and spanned from 31st to 33rd Streets between Avenue H and Avenue I. The integration of Galveston's public schools in 1968 merged Central High and Ball High Schools. The 31st Street building is now Central Middle School.

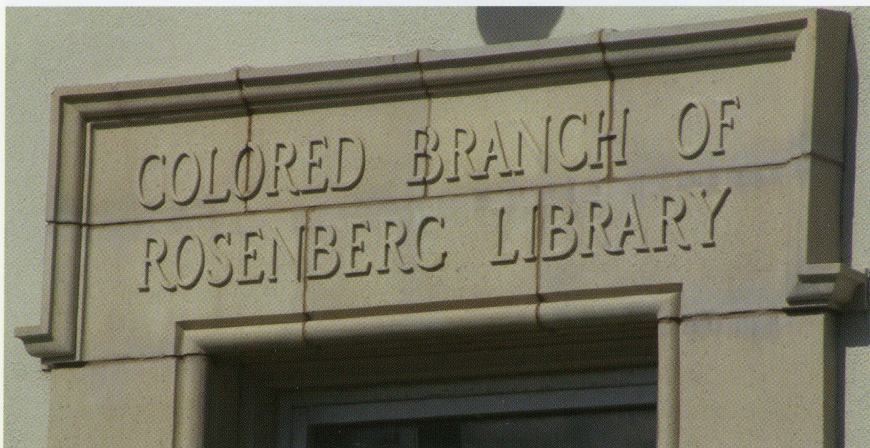
**15. Old Central Cultural Center,
formerly the Colored Branch of the Rosenberg Library,
Texas' First African American Public Library, 1905**

2627 Avenue M
(409) 765-7878



The former annex to the old Central High School serves today as Old Central Cultural Center.

“An annex to Central High School for a library for the Colored People of Galveston” was authorized by the Galveston School Board on May 18, 1904. A collaborative effort between the Rosenberg Library Association, the City of Galveston and the Galveston School Board became a reality on January 11, 1905. The library was moved to the wing added to the Central High School in 1924. The Clayton-designed main building is gone, but the annex, including the “Colored Branch” remains, and is now a museum and the home of the Old Central Cultural Center.



Juneteenth through the Years

Why We Celebrate Juneteenth

On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger issued General Order #3 in Galveston to inform the people of Texas that a proclamation from President Abraham Lincoln deemed that all slaves were free. This message took more than two and a half years to reach Texas. Juneteenth celebrations commemorating the freedom of Texas' 250,000 slaves started in Galveston and are now observed throughout America. More than 24 states recognize this date as a state holiday or have some official form of observance.

16. Site of the Osterman Building, Headquarters of the Union Army in Texas

22nd and Strand

The Osterman Building (now demolished) served as the headquarters of the Union Army in 1865. General Gordon Granger first issued General Order #3 from this site.

Reedy Chapel AME (see no. 9)

On January 1, 1866, the Emancipation Proclamation was read at the African Methodist Episcopal Church on 20th and Broadway (now Reedy Chapel). A large number of the freed slaves marched from the Courthouse on 21st and Ball streets to the church, where the director of the Freedman's Bureau read the Proclamation to the marchers. The Emancipation Proclamation is still read at the church each year at the Juneteenth Celebration.

17. Ashton Villa

2328 Broadway
(409) 762-3933

Ashton Villa has served as the site to commemorate the modern reading of the Emancipation proclamation for more than 25 years. Former Texas Representative Al Edwards, the composer of the bill that made Juneteenth a Texas state holiday, has been a part of the Ashton Villa celebration each year.



State Representative Al Edwards (below) addresses a Juneteenth crowd at Ashton Villa.



18. Site of Cotton Jammers' Park 3726 Avenue S

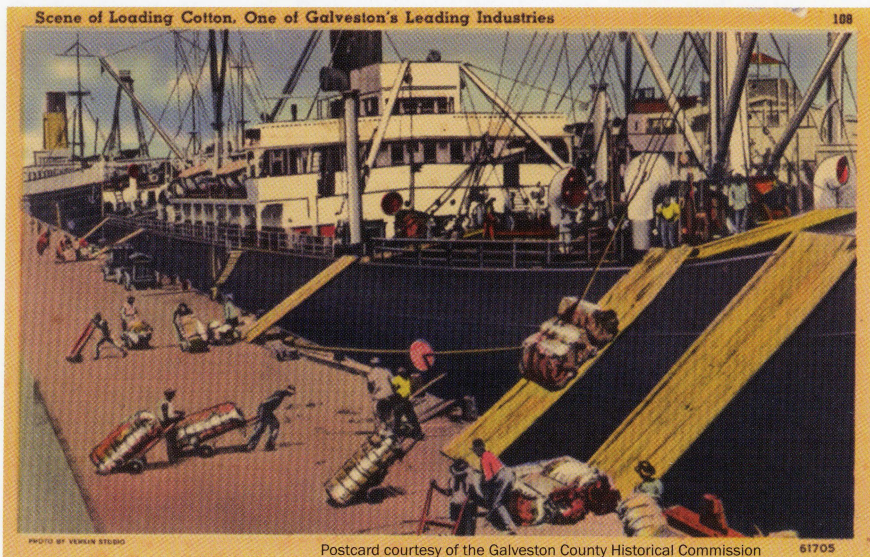
Galveston was one of the important cotton ports in the nation. Early African American waterfront labor traces its origin to the Typographical Union organized in 1857, the Screw-



Courtesy of the Galveston County Historical Museum

men's Benevolent Association created in 1866, and the Lone Star Cotton Jammers of Texas chartered in 1889. The art of screwing cotton bales tightly into place, or cotton jamming, was developed to get as many bales of cotton as possible in the holds of the ships. The International Longshoremen's Association Local #851 was chartered in 1913 and eventually absorbed the Cotton Jammers. The Cotton Jammers once owned a park at Avenue S.

Above, "screwmen" use a horizontal jack to jam cotton bales into the hold of a ship. Below, longshoremen skid cotton bales aboard ship.



Scene of Loading Cotton. One of Galveston's Leading Industries

108

PHOTO BY VERNER STUDIO

Postcard courtesy of the Galveston County Historical Commission

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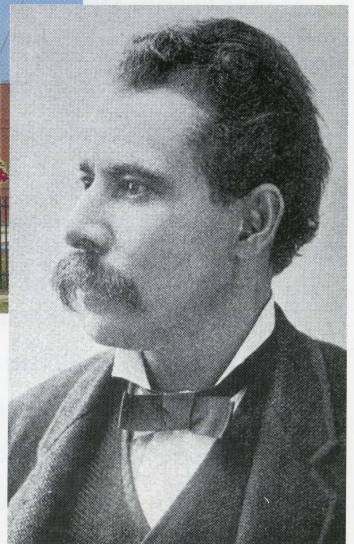
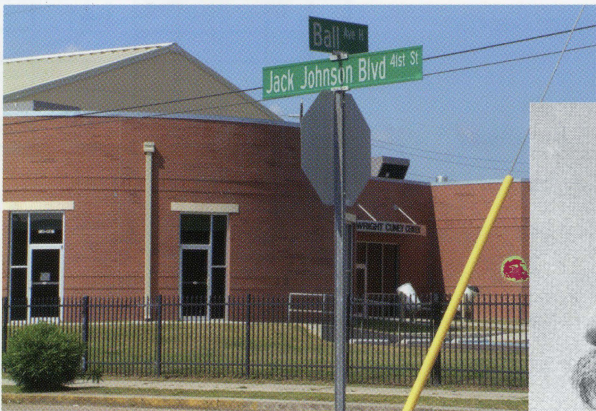
19. Norris Wright Cuney Park

718 41st Street (Jack Johnson Boulevard)

(409) 766-2140

This park is a monument to the great civic leader, politician, businessman, and labor organizer whose mother was a slave. As a political leader on the island he was elected twice to the Board of Aldermen, representing Ward 12 on the east end of the island. Among his many accomplishments in Galveston he made it possible for African Americans to work as stevedores on the wharf. His political clout helped in the building of public schools

for African American children. Many civic and social programs, including Juneteenth activities, are held at the park. A new building was erected in 2004.

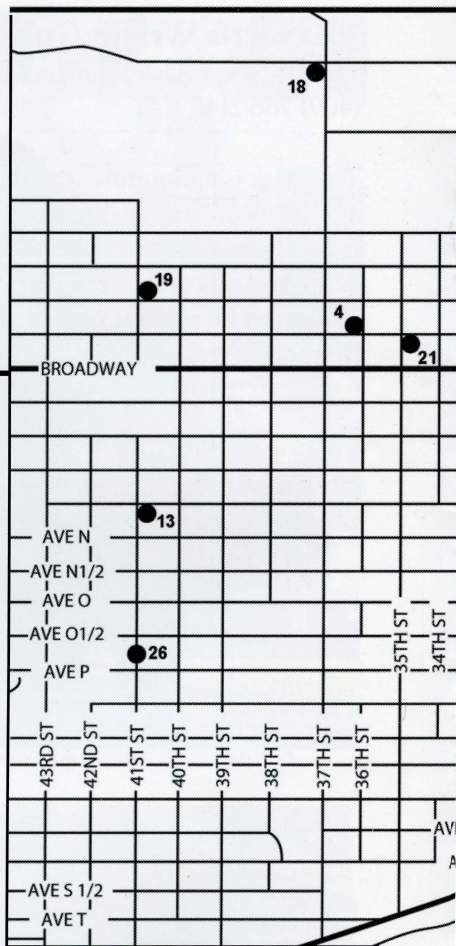


Norris Wright Cuney, 1846-1898

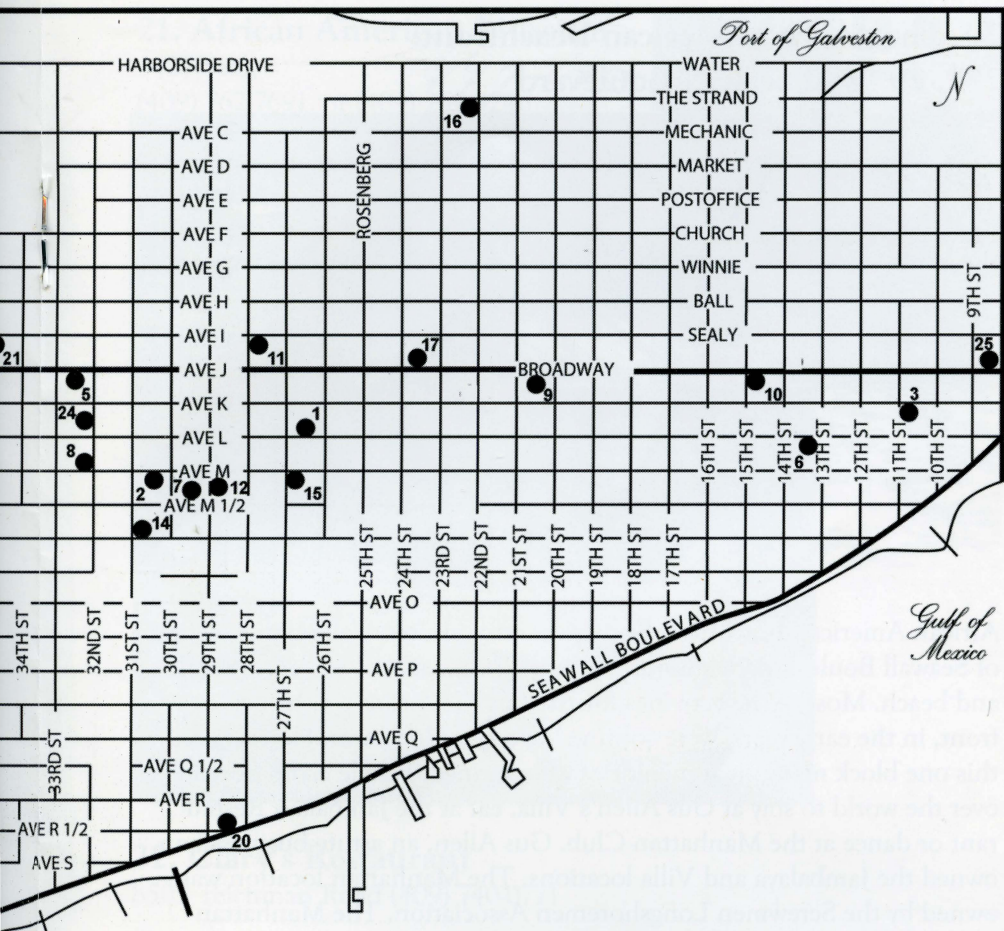
Galveston's African American Historic Places and Pioneers

2010 Edition

22, 23



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15. Central High School site and Old Central Cultural Center at the former Colored Branch of the Rosenberg Library, 2627 Avenue M



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21. African American Museum, 3427 Sealy
22. Clary's Restaurant, 8509 Teichman Road
23. Rosewood Cemetery, Central City Boulevard, 61st Street and Seawall
24. Yeager Children's Home, 111 32nd Street
25. Site of Jack Johnson's home, 808-810 Broadway
26. Jack Johnson Boulevard, 41st Street
27. St. Vincent House, 2817 Postoffice

20. The African American Beachfront: 28th, 29th and Seawall Boulevard



Postcard courtesy of the Galveston County Historical Commission

African American beachfront businesses once clustered along this section of Seawall Boulevard. Segregation extended even to Galveston's Seawall and beach. Most of the activities for African Americans on the beach front, in the early years, were confined to a one-block area. However, in this one block many great memories were formed. People came from all over the world to stay at Gus Allen's Villa, eat at the Jambalaya Restaurant or dance at the Manhattan Club. Gus Allen, an astute businessman, owned the Jambalaya and Villa locations. The Manhattan location was owned by the Screwmen Longshoremen Association. The Manhattan Club property was finally sold to the 7-Eleven Stores. Menard Park (below) between 27th and 28th streets, remains a center of African American recreational activities, though the once-popular African-American businesses in the next block are gone. Today, the McGuire-Dent Recreation Center is located at Menard Park.



21. African American Museum

3427 Sealy

(409) 762-7691, or (409) 256-9246

497-6963

The museum, a dream of Mr. James Josey, is as yet open only by appointment. The portraits of many outstanding African Americans from the city have been painted by E. Herron on the walls of the building.



22. Clary's Restaurant

8509 Teichman Road (409) 740-0771

Clary's Restaurant has been serving food that is "Love At First Bite" for over 22 years. The restaurant was opened in 1977 by Mr. Clary Milburn, and is noted for serving the best seafood and steak you can eat. Clary's is one of many African American enterprises that have thrived in Galveston over the years; we will feature others in future editions of this guidebook.



Other Notable Places and People

23. Rosewood Cemetery

The site of the Rosewood Cemetery is still in existence though in disarray. Historical records show the land was once owned by the late Thomas D. Armstrong and Nando Herbert. The Rosewood Cemetery Association was founded by African Americans

in Galveston around 1911. The first burial, according to records, was that of Robert Bailey, a 14-day-old child. The date was February 12, 1912. The last burial was that of Frank Boyer, on June 29, 1944. A group of citizens cleaned up the cemetery a few years ago, but later found that the land was no longer owned by the association. Efforts are being made to secure the site.

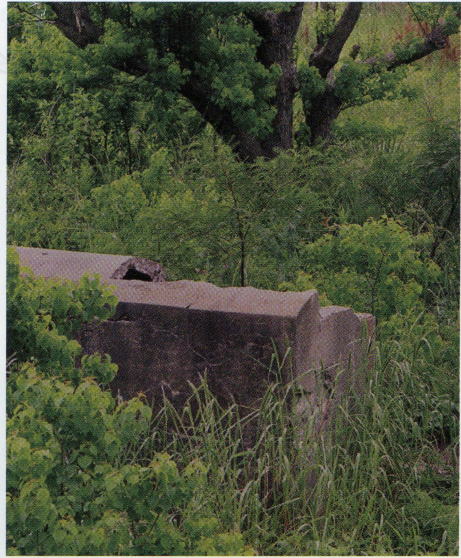


Photo by Marsh Davis



24. Yeager Home

Charlie and Albertine Hall Yeager moved to Galveston and started a day nursery and kindergarten in their home. In 1923, they purchased a new home at 1111-32nd Street and continued to care for children. By 1930, the day nursery and kindergarten became a non-profit orphanage. Over the years the home provided for more than 1,000

children in the community. It was incorporated as the Yeager Children's Home in 1960.

Jack Johnson

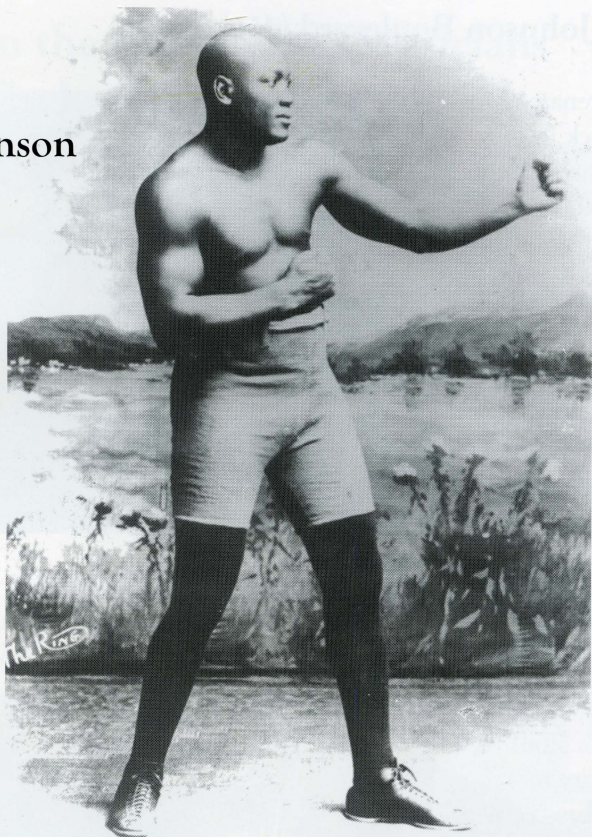


Photo courtesy Old Central Cultural Center

World Heavyweight Champion, 1908-1915

John Arthur “Jack” Johnson was born in Galveston on March 31, 1879. He lived at 808 Broadway and several other locations in the city. He attended Galveston Public school and in later years worked as a stevedore on the wharf. His boxing career started in Galveston with 113 fights, of which he only lost six. He left Galveston, traveled the world and amidst much controversy became the heavyweight champion of the world. He was a talented, clever, astute and proud gentleman who was not afraid to date white women in a time when such scandal put an African American man’s very life in jeopardy. Jack Johnson died in a car accident in July of 1946.

25. Site of Jack Johnson’s boyhood home

808-810 Broadway

Neither of the houses at this site were here when Johnson was growing up in Galveston, but the little shotgun-style house at 808 is typical of the homes of African American working people at the turn of the last century.

26. Jack Johnson Boulevard (41st Street)

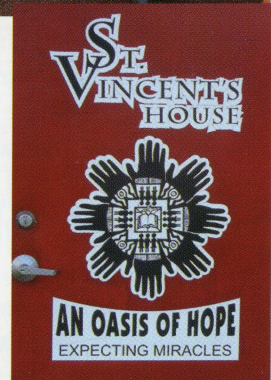
The street renamed in honor of Jack Johnson runs from the wharves and railyards of Galveston Harbor to the Seawall, through what is still largely an African American neighborhood. At Ball, it borders Norris Wright Cuney Park (no. 19 on our map).



27. St. Vincent's House

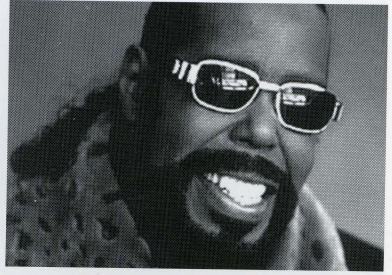
2817 Post Office Street
(409) 763-8521

St. Vincent's House is a social service mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. It began in 1954 as a small outreach ministry of St. Augustine of Hippo Episcopal Church to the youth in Carver Park and Old Central neighborhoods "North of Broadway." For more than 50 years, St. Vincent's has provided programs and services for the disadvantaged and underserved population in the community. Michael Jackson, lay vicar of St. Augustine Episcopal Church, is the executive director. He follows in the footsteps of the renowned Alfreda Batiste Houston, recently deceased this year, under whose stewardship St. Vincent's developed programs including child care, pre-schooling, job training, a food pantry, an alternative school and a medical clinic.

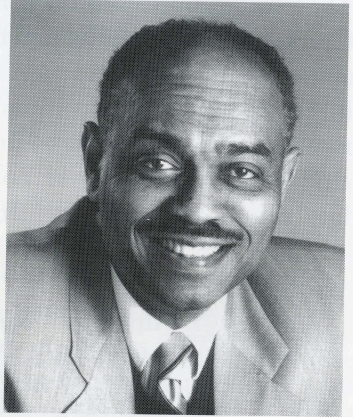


Born on the Island: Two Musicians and a Tireless Civic Leader

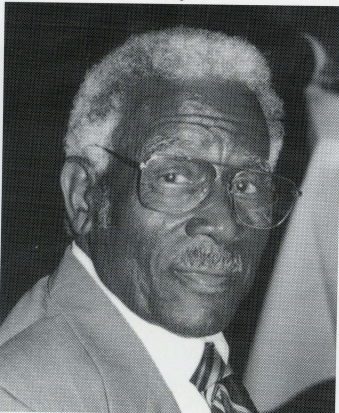
Barry White was born in Galveston, Texas, on September 12, 1944, but raised in Los Angeles, California. His mother gave him piano lessons and taught him how to harmonize when he was four years old. He made his first record at 16 years of age with a group called the Upfronts. During the peak of his career he received gold and platinum records for worldwide sales. In 1990 he won a Grammy Award for the Quincy Jones song, "Secret Garden." Barry White died on July 4, 2003.



Frederick C. Tillis is a Galveston-born African American composer, who expresses himself in the forms of the European classical music tradition, at the same time infusing them with the spirit of black vernacular music. Tillis matured as a composer in the 1960s. In 1968, he deliberately adopted a compositional style rooted in the thematic and harmonic materials of the spiritual. His chamber work uses the spiritual in intimate settings for chorus, string quartet, and solo song with piano.



The Reverend James B. Thomas was born in Galveston in 1924, has five children, seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren. He retired in 1980 from a 31-year career with the U. S. Post Office. This full family and work life did not get in the way of a passion for serving his community. He was the pastor of the Market Street Baptist Church, a member of the Housing Authority Board, a Galveston city councilman for 17 years, a president of Galveston NAACP, and founder of Operation Safe Play, among many other services to Galveston.





Greek-Letter Trailblazers

The year 2006 marked the centennial anniversary of African American Greek-letter organizations in the United States. These organizations had and continue to have a vision and purpose to foster leadership training, high academics, racial uplift and social interaction. Greek-letter organizations started in colleges and universities and now have chartered graduate chapters all over the world. Following is a brief history of the national and local fraternity and sorority chapters.

ΑΦΑ Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. (above), the first national collegiate fraternity for African American men, was founded on December 4, 1906, at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. The chapter selected the motto “First of All, Servants of All, We Shall Transcend All.” Black and old gold were selected as the colors to represent the fraternity. The national body has grown to over 200,000 members. Gamma Pi Lambda Chapter was chartered in Galveston, Texas, in January, 1942. Several of their outstanding projects include providing scholarships for college and science fairs, organizing food and clothing drives, participating in tutoring and mentoring programs, sponsoring a gang prevention group called Young People Working Together, naming 29th Street Martin Luther King Drive, sponsoring Little League baseball teams in Galveston and on the Mainland, sponsoring Alpha Merit groups, organizing voter registration drives, and participating in Champions of Children, MLK and Juneteenth.





AKA

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (below and above at the annual Mardi Gras Ball Scholarship Fundraiser), the first national collegiate sorority for African American women, was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington D.C. in January, 1908. Ethel Hedgeman, the sweetheart of Alpha man George Lyle, along with eight other young women, laid the groundwork for the organization. The motto "Service to all Mankind" was adopted, along with the colors salmon pink and apple green. Beta Phi Omega Chapter was chartered in Galveston on March 23, 1938. Among the many projects it organizes are: awards and scholarships for college attendance; awards for Science Fair participants; Fashionetta and Mardi Gras Balls to raise funds for scholarships and community projects; the annual Health Fair; the annual Coats for Kids Drive; Girls in Community Service mentoring and tutoring program; Teenage Pregnancy Prevention and Reading Is Fundamental projects for third graders; Champions of Children; and participation in MLK and Juneteenth celebration activities.





KAPΨ

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., was founded at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, on January 5, 1911. There were only 10 African American men on the campus at this time. It was the vision of these astute young men to sow the seed of a fraternal tree whose fruit is available to, and now enjoyed by, college men everywhere, regardless of their color, religion or national origin. They selected the colors crimson and cream. The Galveston Alumni Chapter was chartered December 2, 1950. Projects of the chapter include donations to the Boys Scouts of America, a Fire Safety Project that distributes smoke detectors to families, work with Habitat for Humanity, participation in Annual Walk-a-Thon for AIDS research, voter registration, and hosting a Mardi Gras Ball to raise funds for scholarships.

ΩΨΦ

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., was the first national Greek-letter fraternity to be founded at a Negro institution. It was founded in November, 1911 on the campus of Howard University. The name Omega Psi Phi was formed from the initials of the Greek phrase meaning "friendship is essential to the soul." The group adopted four cardinal principles: manhood, scholarship, perseverance and uplift. They selected the colors purple and gold. The Rho Nu Chapter in Galveston was chartered in March, 1970. Projects of the chapter include: participating in the Annual Blood Drive; providing scholarships for high school students to attend college; making donations to the Women's Crisis Center; and sponsoring a Little League baseball team.





Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded on the campus of Howard University in January, 1913. Galveston's own Jessie McGuire Dent was one of the 22 founding members. Crimson and cream, which denote courage and purity, were selected as their colors. The Galveston alumnae chapter was chartered in 1941. "A public service sorority," the organization presents scholarships to Galveston County high school seniors, makes monetary donations to non-profit organizations that assist the needy (such as St. Vincent's House, below), presents programs on current health concerns, holds coat drives and presents voter education sessions. In addition, the Galveston chapter sponsors the Delta Gems, a teen youth group, and annually presents the "Red and White Golden Couples Luncheon" recognizing couples married 50 years or more. They participate in Champions of Children and MLK and Juneteenth celebrations.





Phi Beta

Sigma Fraternity, Inc. was

founded in April, 1914, on the campus of Howard University. Proudly wearing their colors of royal blue and white, they soon became very active in university life and activities. Phi Beta Sigma's house on campus was described as one of the largest and best equipped frat houses. It had



a huge well equipped library and art gallery. The Galveston Chapter, Epsilon Kappa Sigma, was chartered June 2, 1970. The chapter's projects include voter registration, the "War on Illiteracy Banquet" for high school students, recognition of African American entrepreneurs, assistance in the restoration of the historic Lincoln High School Auditorium in LaMarque, Texas, and the "Help the Elderly Repair Project."



Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. was

founded in January, 1920 through the persistence of Charles R. S. Taylor. His goal was to create a sorority that would be the sister organization to Phi Beta Sigma fraternity. One of the goals selected by the five founding "Pearls" was "furthering the spirit of sisterly love and promoting the ideals of finer womanhood." The colors "royal blue and white" were accepted to match the colors of Phi Beta Sigma, their brother fraternity. The Galveston Alpha Tau Zeta Chapter was chartered in 1942 with local programs that have included the signature Stork's Nest, the March of Dimes, Z-Hope, mentoring of the youth groups Pearlettes, Amicettes and Archonettes, the Amicae Adult Group (friends of Zetas), Profiles of Women, the Blue and White Revue Cotillion, Champions of Children, and participation in MLK and Juneteenth celebrations.

ΣΓΡ

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. (below), founded in November, 1922, is the only African American sorority not established at Howard University. It was founded on the predominantly white campus of Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. Since its establishment the organization has grown from a small dedicated group of teachers to a vast national sorority with women from a variety of professional fields who continue to keep the mission of "Greater Service, Greater Progress." The local chapter, Alpha Theta Sigma, was chartered March 31, 1941. Projects include the annual Mother's Day Brunch when outstanding mothers are recognized, symposia for young children; the "Book Bag Project," when backpacks are filled with school supplies and donated to elementary school children; assistance to needy families; scholarships for high school students to attend college; sponsoring and mentoring "Rhoers," a group for young women; sponsoring "Philos," a group for adult women; holding essay contests and sponsoring "Project Reassurance," which assists pregnant teens.

**ΙΦΘ**

Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. was founded in September, 1963 on the campus of Morgan State University, a historically black institution in Baltimore. Twelve students endeavored to form an organization whose purpose would be "the development and perpetuation of scholarship, leadership, citizenship, fidelity and brotherhood." There is no local chapter.

Galveston Council of Greeks of the National Pan-Hellenic Council



The Galveston Council of Greeks was originally formed in 1940 to coordinate activities of the African American Greek-letter fraternities and sororities, including a Greek Holiday Ball to be held in December of each year as its major fundraiser. Desiring to become more than just a dance group, the Council began to focus on community and cultural enrichment activities. In August, 1971 the group was chartered as the Galveston Council of Greeks of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. The Council presents scholarships to Galveston County's top high school seniors, recognizes outstanding Greeks, and honors dedicated community leaders at its annual Founders Day Luncheon.

Today there are 11 African American Greek chapters in Galveston County. Each has two representatives and an alternate. The chapters are:

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Beta Phi Omega Chapter, Galveston
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Gamma Omega Omega Chapter, Mainland
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Galveston Alumnae Chapter, Galveston
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., LaMarque Alumnae Chapter, Mainland
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Alpha Tau Zeta Chapter, Galveston
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., Alpha Theta Sigma Chapter, Galveston
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Gamma Pi Lambda Chapter, Galveston
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Zeta Tau Lambda Chapter, Mainland
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Galveston Alumnae Chapter, Galveston
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Rho Nu Chapter, Galveston
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Epsilon Kappa Sigma Chapter, Galveston

Some Galveston African American Firsts

Photos courtesy Galveston African-American Museum



Annie Mae Charles

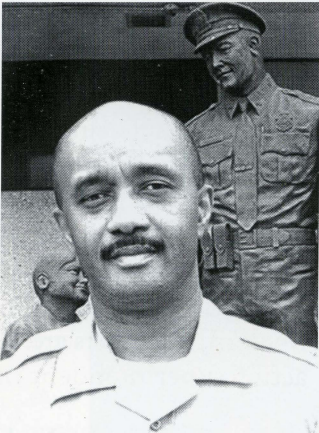
Policeman: **John B. Lawson**

Policewoman: **Annie Mae Charles**

Police chief: **Kenneth Mack**

Fireman: **Genoice Laurice Walker**

City manager in Galveston and the state: **Douglas W. Matthews**



Kenneth Mack

City councilman: **Thomas Armstrong**

Mayor pro-tem: **Rev. David Harris**

City councilwoman and mayor pro-tem: **Cornelia Harris Banks**

Postmaster of the U. S. Postal Service: **Clyde Owen Jackson**

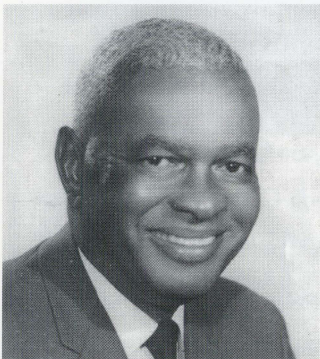
President, Local 851, to be elected to the Executive Board of the South Atlantic and Gulf Coast District of the International Longshoreman Association: **Doc Hamilton**

President of the United Way and director of Social Services, UTMB: **Gloria Haywood**

Youth organizer of sit-in strikes for integration: **Kelton Sam**

Graduate from UTMB nursing program; inducted into the UTMB School of Nursing Hall of Fame:

Wilma Gaston



Thomas Armstrong



Douglas W.
Matthews

District clerk of Galveston County:
Latonia D. Wilson

Principal of Central High School:
Champion H. Waring

Service in two capacities, principal and
librarian, of Central High School:
John R. Gibson

Vice-principal of Central High School:
Frank Windom, Jr.

Librarian hired by Galveston School
District for the Colored Branch of
Rosenberg Library:
Lillian J. Davis

Woman to fight for equalization of
teacher's pay and national founder of
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority:
Jessie McGuire Dent

Woman band director:
Izola Fedford Collins

Director of curriculum, assistant super-
intendent and acting superintendent of
G. I. S. D.:
Dr. L. A. Morgan

Male school board member:
Theasel Henderson

Woman elected to the School Board:
Ann Simmons

Valedictorian of Ball High School:
Dr. Elicia Williams-King

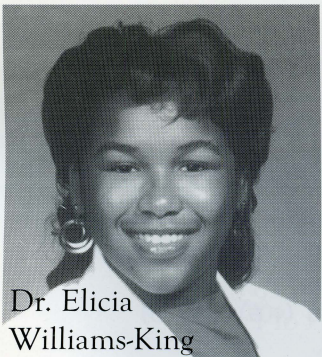
Justice of the Peace:
Judge Penny Pope



Gloria Haywood



Dr. L. A. Morgan



Dr. Elicia
Williams-King



Mural at St. Vincent's House

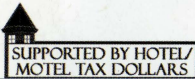
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GALVESTON HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Galveston Historical Foundation's mission is to preserve, revitalize and celebrate the architectural, cultural and maritime heritage of Galveston Island.

www.galvestonhistory.org

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