

PART
I

ART WORK

OF

HOUSTON,
TEXAS.

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THE GRAVURE ILLUSTRATION CO

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SCENE ON BUFFALO BAYOU.

HOUSTON, TEXAS.

It is a difficult matter to write a description and historical sketch of Houston for a work which is intended to present the city entirely from a pictorial, artistic, and wholly non-advertising standpoint. While such a sketch may be non-advertising so far as individuals and individual firms are concerned, it cannot help but be a strong advertisement for the city as a place of residence and as a business location.

The Congress of the Independent Republic of Texas first met in Houston in May, 1837. The city had at that time just been laid out into town lots ; so that, properly speaking, the year in which it was chosen as the capital of the young republic may be regarded as the year of its birth as a city, and its birth as a city as coincident with the birth of Texas as an independent republic. The capitol building was a log cabin standing on the site now occupied by the Rice Hotel. And here met those great men whose names shall ever be revered ; not alone in Texas but wherever patriotism and heroism are admired. And here as president of the young republic



INTERIOR FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.



RESIDENCE AND GROUNDS OF JOHN H. KIRBY.





SCENE ON THE BAYOU.



RESIDENCE OF J. I. CAMPBELL.



RESIDENCE OF S. F. CARTER.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.



SCENES ON MAIN STREET.



came the immortal General Sam Houston, after whom the beautiful city was named, and whose splendid monument it is and shall be for all time.

Houston only remained the capital of Texas until 1840, when the capital was moved to Austin. The wisdom of this removal may at this date, and in view of Houston's marvelous development, be doubted. What was then, to drop into the vernacular of the period and region, merely a wide place in the road has since become one of the foremost cities of the American Union. A city which has grown and expanded wholly upon its merits, and upon the merits of its tributary territory. It has been one of the few cities of the country that has prospered without the employment of those questionable boom methods which have been responsible for so many municipal births and deaths throughout the West.

Nor is it at all to be wondered at that so great interest is shown by the people of other parts of the country in the Houston of the present day and the Houston of the future. A city hitherto following the path of progress at a quiet, steadfast pace, Houston has in a few years undergone a metamorphosis which has brought her into national prominence as a jobbing and general commercial centre. These remarkable changes have arisen from such a union of natural conditions and circumstances as seldom exist to affect the destiny of a city.

Houston is already, not counting her wagon trade, the greatest originating wholesale cotton city in the world ; and having great carrying advantages by reason of being in touch with many of the great trunk lines of America, and with all the great trunk lines of the young but growing Southwest, there was nothing to stand in the way of a large urban growth save a more numerous population of the country, of which Houston seems the natural concentrating point, as she is now the actual trading centre.

The discovery of rich oil deposits at Beaumont, Sour Lake, Saratoga, Batson's Prairie, and other adjacent points has lately and unexpectedly given great impetus to the business of Houston and of the coast country, which is now filling up with new homeseekers and business-seekers from every part of the Union.

Then, too, while Houston has for many years done an extensive water shipping business through her natural outlet to the ocean, chiefly by her important system of barges, the work of improving the channel, undertaken by the United States government at a cost of \$4,000,000 so as to bring together the ocean carrying trade and Houston railways and terminals, will soon admit to her furnaces at lower cost than before the coal and fuel available to ocean craft at many ports. With all this and much more already hers there is nothing to stand in the way of truly metropolitan development.

The most recent of the oil discoveries near Houston are within easy piping distance of the city, besides being close to main line railroads all running direct to the city. In addition to the oil discoveries vast reservoirs of natural gas have been tapped in adjacent territory, and