



Downtown Houston at Main and Capitol, 1940.

Photo courtesy of Story Sloane III.

One Hundred Years

The Harris County Historical Society, 1923-2023

By Ann Dunphy Becker, President of Harris County Historical Society

On Saturday, September 22, 1923, the *Houston Post* announced the following:

Organization of the Harris County Historical Society will take place at 3 P.M. today in the rooms of the University Club, was announced by Colonel A. J. Houston of La Porte. A special invitation is extended to schoolteachers interested in Texas history. The meeting was called at the request of the State Historical Association, officials of which have asked that such organizations be formed in the many counties of Texas.

The Harris County Historical Society was founded on October 2, 1923, in honor of the eighty-eighth anniversary of the Battle of Gonzales. Early members were sons, daughters, and grandchildren of signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence or veterans of San Jacinto who had detailed knowledge of historical events. The Society's founding members were Andrew Jackson Houston, Adele Lubbock Briscoe Looscan, Clarence R. Wharton, Sam Houston Dixon, Mrs. I. B. McFarland, and Judge Lewis R. Bryan. The 1949 Roster had a membership of 334 names, including Birdsall Briscoe, George and Herman Brown, Will Clayton, Craig Cullinan, Jesse Jones, L. W. Kemp, Dr. Edgar O. Lovett, Andrew Forest Muir, Dr. Henry R. Maresh, Rev. Anton J., and Jesse Ziegler.

If you are a history enthusiast and want to join our organization, please visit our website shown below. Our monthly meetings are held from September through May on the second Wednesday evening of the month. We have met at the Houston Racquet Club for the past several years. During the pandemic, we successfully held live meetings via Zoom



Emily Harris, left, and Megan Dagnall, right, received the inaugural Award for Excellence.

Photo courtesy of LaRahia Smith.

to continue our mission which is: to encourage, advocate and administer the discovery, collection, preservation, and publication of historical information, records, oral histories, visuals, and other materials relating to the history of Harris County and to educate the public about the critical history of Harris County, Texas. We present exciting speakers who entertain and educate our membership and continue to publish local history.

Through Dr. Debbie Harwell's guidance, the current Harris County Historical Society board has partnered with the University of Houston Center for Public History to create an endowment, the first and only undergraduate endowment in public history at the University of Houston! A scholarship of \$1,500 will be awarded annually to an undergraduate junior or senior or a graduate student interested in general history. The inaugural award went to two students, Megan Dagnall and Emily Harris, for their well-researched public history projects related to Houston and Harris County history. We presented the awards at our organization's Centennial Celebration on October 3, 2023, a 1920s-themed event recognizing our one hundred years of advocating and preserving history for the public. Proceeds from the event will help fund the endowment for our Award for Excellence scholarship in future years. **HH**

For more information on how you can join or donate, go to our website, www.harriscountyhistory.org, or contact us via email, hchs1923@gmail.com.