

Draft Narrative and Supporting Material

Official Texas Historical Marker application

Proposed Marker: P.F. Roberts Store at 301 Victoria St.

To: Texas Historical Commission

Date: 20 April 2021

Prepared by: UTSA Center for Cultural Sustainability

Dupont, W.A., Gentry, C., Vannette, A., Quinn, T., graduate assistant Brown, K.

Prepared for: Ernest Qadimasil, property owner of 601 and 533 S Pine, and Frost Bank

Proposed Marker Text:

P.F. Roberts

(1869–1953)

The son of former slaves, Lawyer Henry Porter Field (P.F.) Roberts came to Texas from Mississippi in 1893 to teach in Floresville. He moved to San Antonio in 1895 to teach at the Cuney School, once located near this site in the former Baptist Settlement neighborhood. In 1906, he purchased a commercial building at this site and operated a mercantile business here until 1922. At the time, it was one of few African American owned businesses in San Antonio during the Jim Crow era and one of the only grocery stores in the Baptist Settlement. In 1915, Roberts opened a second grocery store at his residence in the Denver Heights neighborhood and shortly after started teaching at the Douglass School. In addition to his career as an educator and businessman, Roberts became a charter member of the San Antonio chapter of the NAACP in 1918. He was the branch's treasurer for multiple decades and served as its sixth president, conducting civil rights business at his Denver Heights home.

Contents

Proposed Marker Text: 1

Marker Narrative:..... 3

 The Baptist Settlement Community and the Reconstruction Era in San Antonio 3

 Lawyer Henry Porter Field “P.F.” Roberts (1869–1953) 4

 Establishing the Baptist Settlement Store, 1897–1913 5

 The Denver Heights Neighborhood 6

 Ira Kilpatrick and the Kilpatrick Clan, 1889–1914 7

 Closing the Baptist Settlement Store, 1922 8

 Urban Renewal and Loss of the Baptist Settlement, 1922–1968..... 9

 Roberts Later Career as Businessman, Educator, and Civil Rights Leader, 1915–1953 10

 The Roberts’ Legacy..... 13

Images 14

Bibliography 20

Support Letter from Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff 25

Petition to City of San Antonio..... 26

Marker Narrative:

The Baptist Settlement Community and the Reconstruction Era in San Antonio

San Antonio's African American community fared comparatively well following the end of the Civil War. Although Texas has a hideously tragic record of lynchings, 500 between 1870 and 1890 placing it among the worst of all U.S. states, none occurred in San Antonio (Mason, 1998, pp. 170 and xv). Educational opportunities for African Americans in San Antonio exceeded those elsewhere in the state, with San Antonio boasting higher youth literacy rates by 1900 than Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and Galveston (Mason, p. 142).

The ten-square-block area known as Baptist Settlement was one of the first places former slaves and free blacks settled in San Antonio. In the late 1700s, the land was part of the Mission holdings divided among Los Adaes Indians from Louisiana and some early San Antonio settlers, and has long been a site of local change and transition (Neighborhood Discovery Tour, p. 4).

Additionally, the arrival of the railroad in 1877 and the nascent tourism industry that resulted in San Antonio led to increased employment opportunities for the city's African Americans (Mason, p. 54). Within 50 years of the railroad's arrival, African American home ownership in San Antonio was the highest in the state (Mason, p. 34).

It was also the arrival of the railroad—and resulting 'white flight' to outlying areas connected by streetcar to the city's core—that led to development of neighborhoods that would evolve to become San Antonio's East Side. Mason notes, as white San Antonians moved farther out, "their vacant structures became homes for blacks, many of whom worked for the railroads and nearby industries" (pp. 30–31).

It was in this San Antonio that Roberts arrived in 1895, the year before the U.S. Supreme Court established the gravely flawed doctrine of "separate but equal" in *Plessy v Ferguson*. This doctrine drove government policies and social practices over the entirety of P.F. Roberts' life.

Lawyer Henry Porter Field “P.F.” Roberts (1869–1953)

Lawyer* Henry Porter Field “P.F.” Roberts was born on August 12, 1869, on the Bridgforth Plantation near Vaughan in Yazoo County, Mississippi, the son of Amos Bookman Roberts and Susan “Susie” Galvan Roberts. Amos and Susie had been slaves under Robert M. Bridgforth and Lawyer Henry Porter Field was among the eldest of nine children. Little else is known about P.F. Roberts’ childhood.

In 1893, P.F. Roberts graduated as valedictorian from the normal school at Tougaloo University (now Tougaloo College) near Jackson, Mississippi, and moved to Texas to pursue a teaching career. He rode in a livestock car to San Antonio, Texas, and made his way to Floresville, which had recently incorporated and established its first schools. He taught for two years and although he was paid a salary by a local church, he picked cotton for additional income to provide supplies for his students (E. Qadimasil, personal communication, January 11, 2021).

In 1895, Roberts moved to San Antonio and started teaching at the Norris Wright Cuney School in the Baptist Settlement, a racially diverse neighborhood that existed between downtown and Sunset Station (*The San Antonio Daily Express*, June 11, 1907, p. 8). Established in 1883 as the Santa Clara School, the Cuney School was located on the south side of North Street between Newton and Santa Clara. At the time, it was the closest school serving African Americans living in eastern San Antonio; the only other public school for African Americans was the Riverside School (formerly Rincón School and later Frederick Douglass School) north of downtown at St. Mary’s and Convent Streets (SAAACAM, “Education Timeline”).

P.F. Roberts’ connections quickly grew and he was soon befriended by prominent banker Thomas Claiborne “T.C.” Frost. Although Frost was 36 years older than Roberts, they were said to have hunted together and both actively bought and sold hounds (Qadimasil, 2021). There were also many parallels in their education and mercantile careers that they may have bonded over. After graduating as valedictorian at Irving College near McMinnville, Tennessee in 1853, T.C. Frost served as assistant professor for Latin at Austin College in Huntsville, Texas, while clerking with Sam Houston and Henderson King Yoakum, and moved to Comanche County to

* Roberts did not practice law, and the term “Lawyer” does not appear in his legal name. Rather, the term emanates from a tradition of assigning prophetic monikers to newborn children (Qadimasil, personal communication, January 2021).

practice law after being admitted to the state bar in 1856 (Tavarez, 1995). Despite signing the Articles of Secession and serving as a lieutenant colonel in the Confederate Army, T.C. Frost's later life could be considered progressive for the Jim Crow era. He moved to San Antonio to help run the mercantile and auctioneering business established by his brother, John Morrison Frost, opened a general store in 1868, and loaned money to African Americans. T.C. Frost was said to have lent P.F. Roberts \$2,000 in 1896, which may have been the impetus that allowed Roberts to transition from solely teaching to establishing businesses and dealing in real estate (Qadimasil, 2021). In 1903, T.C. Frost passed away, but Roberts still kept an account with Frost Bank and likely had a similar relationship with his son and successor, Thomas C. Frost, who also engaged in hunting with fox hounds (Riddle, 1922, p. 9; Roberts, 1921, p. 13).

Establishing the Baptist Settlement Store, 1897–1913

Roberts purchased his first property on Ash Street for \$250 in 1897, although in 1900 he was still boarding in a nearby house on Edgar Street owned by Reason and Nancy Johnson (U.S. census). Roberts began acquiring more property, buying a lot on Edgar Street from the Johnsons in 1902, a commercial building in the Baptist Settlement at 301 Victoria Street in 1906 where he briefly lived with his mother Susan and brother Harold, multiple lots on Alabama Street in 1910 where he later briefly lived in the mid-1910s, and multiple lots on S. Pine Street in 1912 and 1913. On February 27, 1913, Roberts mortgaged 301 Victoria Street for \$1,100 and the next day purchased 601 S. Pine Street for \$1,000, which would become the site of his home for the rest of his life.

The commercial building at 301 Victoria Street, now César E Chávez Boulevard, became P.F. Roberts' first grocery store. It was one of the few stores in the Baptist Settlement and likely the first African American owned grocery store in the neighborhood. It stood only three blocks southwest from the original Cuney School where he taught and two blocks west of the original Mount Zion First Baptist Church on Santos Street, an anchor of the Baptist Settlement from 1871 until its relocation in the 1920s. The store was built circa 1885 as a single-story wood frame building with a front porch at the east corner of Victoria and Indianola streets while under ownership of A. and Laura Matthews. The Matthews sold the property to P.F. Roberts for \$1,700 in the form of \$700 in cash and a promissory note worth \$1,000 owed to P.F. Roberts by Edward Lang. Under Roberts' ownership, the store was enlarged and its wares included meat, coal oil,

groceries, wood, and other dry goods. The signage on the front parapet read “P.F. ROBERTS” (Center for Archaeological Research, 1997, pp. 95–97).

The highly visible prominence of the P.F. Roberts name painted across the front parapet of his store, located very close to the geographic center of the city, may look normal to the modern eye, yet stands in contrast to the cruel facts of racial discrimination and potential for violence against commercial enterprises operated by African Americans at that time. Of course, the racial segregation practiced in San Antonio meant African Americans were not allowed into stores for white people. As Mason notes, of the 25 African American owned small businesses that emerged in San Antonio during the first two decades of the twentieth century, “nearly all depended on black patronage. Most remained small family enterprises ... Many [business owners] held full-time or part-time jobs when not utilizing their talents as self-employed” (p. 69). He continues, “Very few African-Americans in San Antonio were able to reach the ranks of the self-employed,” and, “the most successful ventures were those whose owners held connections with powerful white civic leaders” (pp. 70, 72). Despite the racist restrictions, the store was financially successful as related by daughter Henrietta Roberts in personal communication from 1993 (CAR, 1997, p. 95).

The Denver Heights Neighborhood

In 1903, the Southern Pacific railroad depot was built on Commerce Street, and when sewer and water became available, residential and industrial development shifted south of Commerce to the neighborhood originally known as South Heights. By 1916, the neighborhood was known as Denver Heights, and was home to a mixture of African American, German, Jewish, Irish, Polish, Mexican, Native American, and Chinese families. After the Great Depression, Anglo families moved north, selling their homes to African Americans. The proximity to railway and street car lines made the neighborhood appealing, and after the Second World War, a large middle class developed in Denver Heights between the 1940s and 1960s (Neighborhood Discovery Tour, p. 14).

The family of P.F. Roberts was not alone in being leading educators in the Black community. The Sutton family is notable in this regard and patriarch Samuel Johnson “S.J.” Sutton also ran multiple businesses. Common in the community at that time, extra income was earned by

operating multiple businesses, sometimes including speakeasies, for East Side residents who worked for companies centered around the railroad industry, such as Alamo Iron Works and Steves Lumberyard, or by travelers and those who worked along the railways (porters, waiters, mail clerks, repairmen, etc.) (Neighborhood Discovery Tour, p. 8).

The lot at 601 S. Pine Street where P.F. Roberts would eventually settle, operate a business, and host civil rights meetings was in the heart of the Denver Heights Neighborhood, less than 1,000 feet from the Douglass School where he taught and the relocated Mount Zion First Baptist Church where civil rights leader Reverend Claude William Black, Jr. preached. When Roberts purchased the property on the southwest corner of Nebraska (now Martin Luther King Drive) and Pine Streets on February 28, 1913, from G.W. and Sarah K. Ritchey, the site included a store and home that had likely been built between 1908 and 1912. The business and family that were based out of the building may have remained as tenants briefly after the sale as Roberts was still living at 120 Alabama Street in 1914.

Ira Kilpatrick and the Kilpatrick Clan, 1889–1914

Ira Aldridge Kilpatrick was born in Hempstead, Texas, on November 15, 1889, to parents Robert Lincoln and Eugene Freeman Kilpatrick, the second eldest of four daughters. The Kilpatrick family were prominent figures in city and county affairs. Historical accounts say Robert Kilpatrick's father, Madison "Matt" Kilpatrick, was a run-away slave, though the accuracy of this statement is unclear. It is certain Matt Kilpatrick found some prosperity in Texas, acquiring a 400-acre farmstead, establishing a blacksmith shop, and serving multiple terms as treasurer of the territory and as first treasurer of Waller County when it was established in 1873. Matt Kilpatrick was also an active Republican Party boss throughout the late nineteenth century (Yancey, 2013).

Quite remarkably for the time, and similar to P.F. Roberts, Ira Kilpatrick pursued an education career, graduating from the Prairie View Normal and Industrial College (now Prairie View A&M University) in 1911. She initially taught at Neal's Bend in Austin County and later the Prairie View Normal and Industrial College, where she taught mathematics. She would later also receive a bachelor's degree from Prairie View in 1930 by taking extension courses. The high educational

attainment is especially notable for its rarity for anyone in the early twentieth century and especially so for African Americans in the Jim Crow era.

On August 12, 1914, P.F. Roberts married Ira Kilpatrick in Hempstead. P.F. and Ira Roberts' only child, Henrietta Eugene Roberts, was born on June 24, 1915. Henrietta would go on to graduate from Douglass High School in 1931, attend St. Philip's College for one year, and attend the University of Michigan where she received within two years of study a bachelor's degree in Spanish with honors in 1935. She went on to receive two master's degrees in 1936 in French and Spanish. Placing this in context of 1935, she was the only African American woman enrolled at the University of Michigan (*San Antonio Register*, January 27, 1978, p. 9). Like her parents, Henrietta pursued a career as an educator, beginning by teaching Spanish and French at Samuel Huston College (now Huston-Tillotson University) and St. Philip's College, later teaching in New Jersey where she was the first African American teacher in Morristown, and finally returning to San Antonio in 1971 to teach at Laura Steele Elementary School.

Closing the Baptist Settlement Store, 1922

The demographics of the Baptist Settlement were changing and by the early 1920s, "African American residency drifted east and south of the St. Paul's Square-Southern Pacific Railroad depot in the Sixth and Seventh Wards. The community then expanded to embrace Durango and Fairchild Streets and the Carver Park areas [as well as] the Denver Heights, Pittman-Sullivan and Libbergh areas, neighborhoods that largely contained European Jewish immigrants and poor southern whites" (Mason p. 37). This migration occurred towards the properties that Roberts already owned and where he lived. In the early 1920s, landmarks of the Baptist Settlement that relocated included the Cuney School to a location on Iowa Street and the Mount Zion First Baptist Church to a location on Nebraska.

On August 29, 1922, P.F. and Ira Roberts sold 301 Victoria Street to J.M. Brown for \$3,000. Brown paid \$517.90 down with the remainder to take form of \$30 monthly payments with 8% annual interest, providing the Roberts with a steady supplemental income for many years. The site would later change hands twice, from Brown to Emma Yahns Muenster and later to Joseph G. and Mary Ruth Curry.

Urban Renewal and Loss of the Baptist Settlement, 1922–1968

The entirety of the Baptist Settlement was ultimately acquired and demolished as part of an urban renewal project in the 1960s. When Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949, many cities began urban renewal projects, although San Antonio resisted this initial wave of redevelopment. The Housing Act of 1954 increased financial incentives for urban renewal and developers began applying political pressure to begin redevelopment projects. In 1955, San Antonio passed its first housing code and it became certified by the Housing and Home Finance Agency a year later. In 1957, enabling legislation for urban renewal passed in the state legislature and the Texas Supreme Court upheld the act in 1959, as San Antonio began planning its first urban renewal project downtown (Fairbanks, pp. 183–192).

As San Antonio was starting its urban renewal plans, failed redevelopment attempts from other cities across the country were becoming widely publicized. Many of the city's plans were unpopular with the community and the Urban Renewal Agency encountered organized pushback (Fairbanks p. 192). As a result, few plans were implemented. The largest project that was carried out was the Civic Center Project, which almost entirely razed 140 acres, including 301 Victoria Street, to make way for a new convention center and fairgrounds for Hemisfair '68, an International Exposition. Simultaneously, I-37 was being built along the east edge of the new Hemisfair site, further dividing San Antonio's east side from downtown. O'Neil Ford created the master plan and pushed to save as many historic buildings as possible, yet few he advocated for were spared.

The site of 301 Victoria Street was acquired through eminent domain by the Urban Renewal Agency of the City of San Antonio in May 1965. In July 1965, the occupants at the time received \$23,266 in the suit and a demolition contract for all of City Block 891 was issued. Shortly after, the block and numerous others of the Baptist Settlement were razed (Ford, 1965). The site was paved over to make way for César E Chávez Boulevard, initially built immediately north of Victoria Street, which eventually was razed to widen Cesar E. Chavez Boulevard. Today, the footprint of the store is on the median of the boulevard and a small northern portion of the site is now part of a parking lot for nearby federal buildings.

Roberts Later Career as Businessman, Educator, and Civil Rights Leader, 1915–1953

Roberts turned the existing store at 601 S. Pine Street into his second grocery store by 1915, which operated until at least 1927. Roberts and his family lived in the same building adjoining the store and enlarged the residence over the years. The lot across Nebraska Street from the Roberts home, with addresses of 533 and 535 S. Pine Street had belonged to P.F. Roberts since December 27, 1912. Under his ownership a commercial brick building was built there in the 1920s and was leased out to multiple businesses. 533 S. Pine Street was the site of a T.O. Sherrill's Red and White Store in the 1930s and 1940s and later a Paul's Grocery and Market in the 1950s and 1960s. 535 S. Pine Street was a restaurant known as the Congo Grill in the 1940s and the Black and White Grill in the 1950s and 1960s, often serving as a live music venue where musicians touring on the Chitlin' Circuit were said to perform. The grocery store and music venue would have served the nearby and historically significant Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), whose accommodations were only half a block away in a building that still stands at 622 S. Pine Street. The BSCP was a labor union active 1925–1978 and very significant in the history of civil rights.

In April 1918, the San Antonio chapter of the NAACP became the second branch in Texas, electing John A. Grumbles as its first president. P.F. Roberts was one of the thirteen charter members and would serve as its sixth president in the early 1930s. The chapter quickly grew, increasing from 503 members in its first year to 1,228 just a year later; by the end of 1919, Texas had the most members and chapters (31) of any state. However, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s made participation in NAACP activities highly dangerous and by 1923 there were only five active chapters left in the state. Additionally, Grumbles' death in 1922 led to a dormant period for the San Antonio chapter for a few years (Nolden, 2020, p. 6). Initially, meetings were held at the St. Paul United Methodist Church then located at St. Paul Square, but were relocated to 601 S. Pine Street out of fears the church would become a target for arson. As early as 1891, St. Paul had become, "the target of white hostility and the object of suspicion by African American defenders of Jim Crow. A rash of fires, broken windows and a foiled attempt on [the Rev. Matthew] Henson's life were the results of his speaking out" (Mason, p. 209). The residential location allowed neighbors, many of whom were said to be armed WWI veterans, to provide constant lookout and protection if necessary (Qadimasil, 2021).

Attendees of NAACP meetings held at 601 S. Pine Street were a mix of local and national leaders said to include Charles Bellinger, Reverend Claude William Black, Jr., Henry B. Gonzalez, Thurgood Marshall, A. Phillip Randolph, Mary McLeod Bethune, Eleanor Roosevelt, Lyndon B. Johnson, Charles Hamilton Houston, and others (Qadimasil, 2021). The Roberts home also provided “on short notice ...home-cooked meals and sleeping accommodations for NAACP dignitaries coming to San Antonio for meetings and unable to stay in segregated downtown San Antonio Hotels” (Greene, 2018, p. 6).

Topics discussed at the NAACP meetings included political action, desegregation, and civil rights. One of the earliest actions of the chapter was establishing the Community House (now Carver Community Cultural Center) at 228 Hackberry Street in 1919. During the late 1940s, Thurgood Marshall visited 601 S. Pine Street to conduct research while working for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund on the case *Sweatt v. Painter* in the Texas courts (Qadimasil, 2021). Eventually, the case became a federal suit where the Supreme Court decision established precedent for the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Marshall also made additional visits to San Antonio throughout the 1950s to support various other NAACP initiatives. Not only did Marshall know Roberts through their shared activism with the NAACP, but he was also acquainted with Henrietta’s husband, Ernest Franklin Stevenson, as both had been brothers of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity (Thurgood Marshall had pledged at Lincoln University in 1926 and Ernest Stevenson had pledged at Indiana University, Bloomington, in the early 1930s).

“Flossie Cowans” appears as the niece of P.F. Roberts in the 1910 U.S. Census, when his family resided at 301 Victoria Street in San Antonio (22 April 1910). Mr. Qadimasil has confirmed that “Flossie” was the nickname of Sue Cowan, who was the daughter of P.F. Roberts’ sister Leila and named after her grandmother, Susan Roberts. As the first cousin of Henrietta Roberts, Mr. Qadimasil stated that “Aunt Flossie was Henrietta’s first playmate.” In the late 1910s and 1920s, while Cowan was a student at Spelman, a religious boarding school in Atlanta, she would spend the summer months with her grandmother and cousin at 601 S. Pine Street, according to Mr. Qadimasil (personal communication, 2021).

In 1935, Cowan began teaching at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Little Rock, Arkansas (now on the National Register of Historic Places), where she became chair of the English

Department, married, and changed her last name to Morris. In the 1940s, as “Susie Morris,” she became the lead plaintiff in the landmark *Morris v. Williams* class action lawsuit seeking to equalize pay between black and white teachers in Little Rock, in which she was represented by Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP. The case was successfully appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis in 1945, but Sue Cowan Morris became the target of retribution by segregationists. After her teaching contract was not renewed at the end of the 1942–43 school year, she regularly returned to San Antonio to take refuge from Arkansas, until her reinstatement by the Little Rock School District in 1952 (Kirk, 2009).

Following Roberts’ tenure as president of the NAACP chapter, he was repeatedly elected treasurer, serving between 1932 and 1944, and represented San Antonio at state conventions. He was instrumental in leading fundraising and membership drives, including raising \$1,000 for a statewide political “Defense Fund” in 1940 and 1941 (*San Antonio Register*, December 5, 1941, p. 1). In 1944, he led a campaign to reach 10,000 chapter members. That initiative added 1,275 members, raised \$1,556, and led to the chapter receiving an award as the most outstanding chapter in Texas that year (*San Antonio Register*, June 30, 1944, p. 1). After 1944, Roberts remained active and traded his officer position for a seat on the executive committee, which he held for several years.

P.F. Roberts’ career as an educator continued for his whole life and he was actively involved in campus events. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s he gave speeches at student organization events and served as the master of ceremonies at parent-teacher association meetings. Facing economic trouble in 1940, the San Antonio school system appointed Roberts and two other teachers, including his former colleague S.J. Sutton, on month-to-month contracts, despite distinguishing Roberts as an honors teacher (*San Antonio Register*, April 26, 1940, p. 1). He continued to work and serve on the Teachers Council through the 1940s, finally retiring by 1949 after five decades of teaching (*San Antonio Register*, June 3, 1949, p. 11).

Both P.F. and Ira were active in the YMCA and YWCA, respectively, and raised donations for their branches. P.F. was an officer of the Alamo City branch YMCA, serving on the committee of management and auditing fundraising efforts (*San Antonio Register*, April 5, 1946, p. 7).

During WWII, Ira held a chair at the Pine Street branch YWCA on a drive to raise money for the war effort and led a sewing group (*San Antonio Register*, September 29, 1944, p. 1).

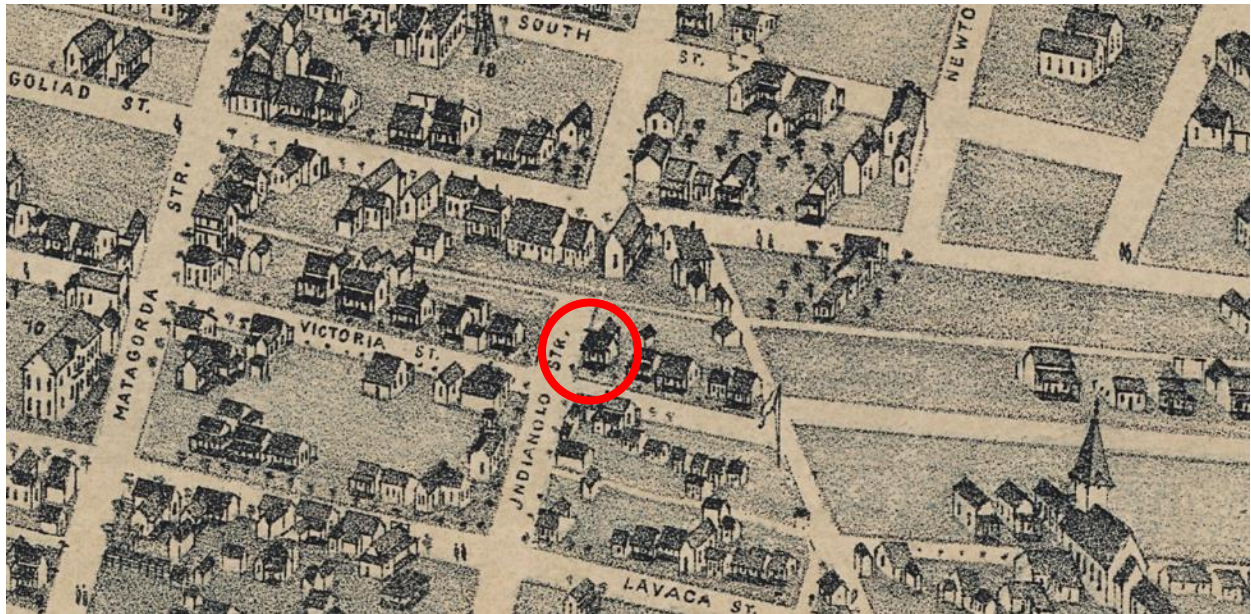
P.F. and Ira Roberts continued to deal in real estate through the 1930s and 1940s, mostly leasing their properties. In 1935, P.F. and Ira Roberts acquired a 41.7 acre parcel of land 12 miles east of their 601 S. Pine Street residence, which they exchanged in 1936 for a 25 acre parcel. From 1938 to 1948, the Roberts' took out four mortgages on various properties for a total of \$6,500, paying them all off by 1958. The home at 120 Alabama Street that the Roberts' were leasing and where P.F. had previously lived was destroyed in a fire on January 19, 1948, and the Ash Street property was eventually demolished to make way for I-35 (*San Antonio Register*, January 23, 1948, p. 1). Both lots were sold, but the remainder of the properties that P.F. and Ira had acquired are still owned by their descendants.

Although Roberts had been active in all facets of his social and professional life through the 1940s, he suffered a stroke around 1951. He retired from his multiple advisory roles and on August 3, 1953, P.F. Roberts passed away at age 83.

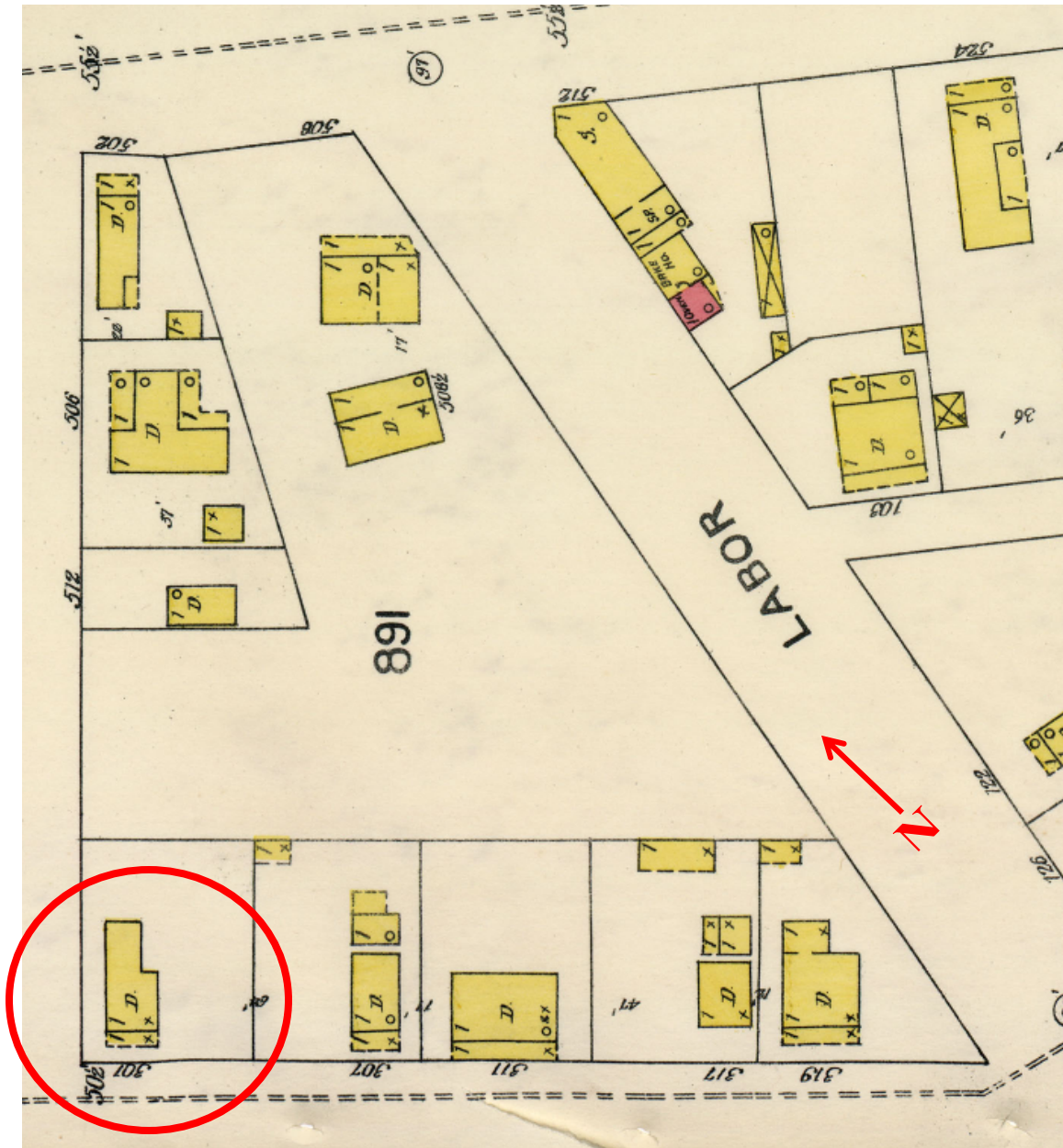
The Roberts' Legacy

P.F. Roberts' devotion to civil rights and education was shared by his spouse Ira and daughter Henrietta. His prominent role as a businessman, launched with assistance from a bank loan at a time when such loans were unlawful, enhanced his many accomplishments. Ira was a Life Member of the NAACP and Henrietta became a Diamond Life Member. Ira passed away on August 25, 1987. Henrietta was active with the Carver Community Cultural Center and was eventually recognized for her life achievements with induction into the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame in 2002 and a resolution passed by the 82nd regular session of the Texas House of Representatives in 2011. Henrietta passed away on October 30, 2009.

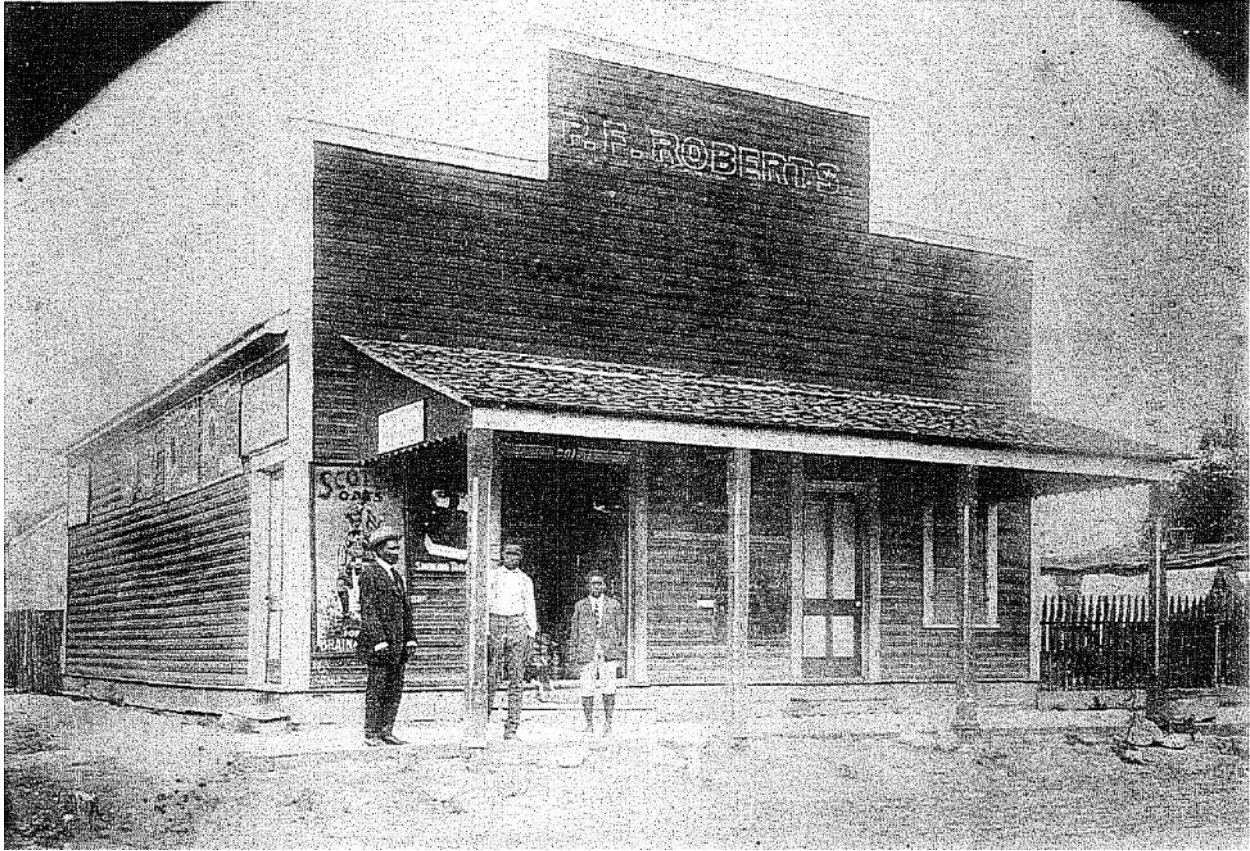
Images



Site of 301 Victoria Street in Augustus Koch's 1886 Bird's Eye View of San Antonio.



301 Victoria Street in 1896 Sanborn Map.



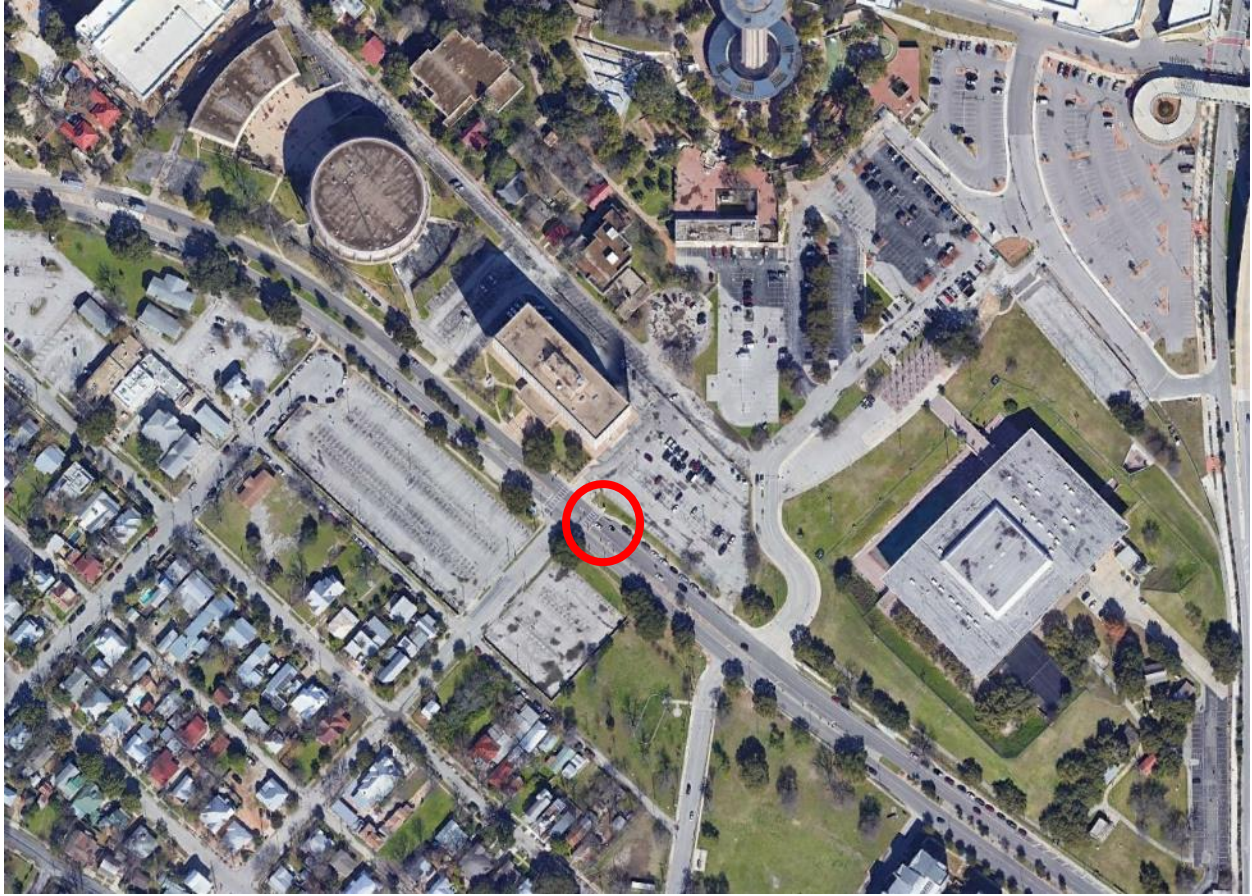
P.F. Roberts' Store in 1910s.



301 Victoria Street in 1912 Sanborn Map.



301 Victoria Street in 1965, facing east.



Site of 301 Victoria Street present day.

Bibliography

Interviews and Oral Histories

Qadimasil, Ernest, interview with UTSA research team, January 11, 2021.

Qadimasil, Ernest, interview with UTSA research team, March 17, 2021.

Books, Reports, and Theses

1900 US census, Bexar County, Texas, population schedule, Precinct 14, enumeration district (ED) 101, sheet 17, dwelling 348, family 379, Porter F Roberts; NARA microfilm publication T623

1910 US census, Bexar County, Texas, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 50, sheet 13, dwelling 261, family 285, Porter F Roberts; NARA microfilm publication

Andrew Perez Associates, Cox, I. Wayne, Fox, Anne A., Gross, Kevin J., Mock, Shirley Boteler, Pfeiffer, Maria W., Uecker, Herbert G., Wright, Kenneth G. (1997). *Archaeology at the Alamodome: Investigations of a San Antonio Neighborhood in Transition*. Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Glasrud, Bruce A. (Ed.). (2011). *African Americans in South Texas History*. Texas A&M University Press.

Kresha, Raymond. *A History of Douglass Academy*. (2008). San Antonio ISD.

Latimore, Carey H. *Civil Rights in San Antonio: WWII to Mid-1960s*. (2020).

Mason, Kenneth. (1998) *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

McClendon, Ruth. *In memory of Henrietta Eugene Roberts Stevenson of San Antonio, Texas* H.R. 358, 82nd Regular Session. (2011).

<https://lrl.texas.gov/legis/BillSearch/BillDetails.cfm?legSession=82-0&billtypeDetail=HR&billNumberDetail=358&billSuffixDetail=>

Nolden, Eric D. "Founding of NAACP in San Antonio 1918: A Call to Activism." *Methods of Historical Research*: Spring 2020, Texas A&M University-San Antonio. 2020.
https://digitalcommons.tamusa.edu/hist4301_spring2020/4

Walker, Tom. (2000). *Banking on Tradition: The 130-Year History of the Frost National Bank*. San Antonio: The Frost National Bank.

Wintz, Cary D., Glasrud, Bruce A. (Ed.) (2012). *The Harlem Renaissance in the American West: The New Negro's Western Experience*. New York: Routledge.

Articles

1907. "School Board Re-Elects with Few Exceptions." *The San Antonio Daily Express*. June 11. (accessed January 25, 2021).

1940. "Three S.A. Public School Principals to Work on Month-to-Month Basis." *San Antonio Register*. April 26. (accessed January 25, 2021).

1941. "S.A. First City to Raise \$1000 'Defense Fund'." *San Antonio Register*. December 5. (accessed January 25, 2021).

1944. "NAACP Reports 1,270 Members in S.A. Drive." *San Antonio Register*. June 30. (accessed January 25, 2021).

1944. "Women Chairmen in Community War Chest Drive Named." *San Antonio Register*. September 29. (accessed January 25, 2021).

1946. "The YMCA in Your Community." *San Antonio Register*. April 5. (accessed January 25, 2021).

1948. "Mother Smashes Door to Save Son Trapped by Fire: East Side Home Guttled by Flames." *San Antonio Register*. January 23. (accessed January 25, 2021).

1949. "Year's Activities of San Antonio Teachers Council Reviewed." *San Antonio Register*. June 3. (accessed January 25, 2021).

1978. "It was News Then." *San Antonio Register*. January 27. (accessed January 25, 2021).
- Bailey, Herbert J. (1993). Charles Bellinger and Jim Crow in San Antonio, Texas, 1905–1937. *South Texas Studies*, 4.
- Fairbanks, Robert B. (2002, May). "The Texas Exception: San Antonio and Urban Renewal, 1949-1965)." *Journal of Planning History* 1, 2: 181-196.
- Kirk, John A. (2009). "The NAACP Campaign for Teachers' Salary Equalization: African American Women Educators and the Early Civil Rights Struggle." *The Journal of African American History* 94, 4 (Fall): 529-552.
- Riddle, George. (1922, November 19). [Advertisement for hounds]. *The San Antonio Express*.
- Roberts, P. F. (1921, July). [Advertisement for hounds]. *The Chase: A Full Cry of Hunting*.

Websites

- Clack, Cary. (2019, May 19). "Back to Denver Heights." *San Antonio Heron*. Accessed February 3, 2021. <https://saheron.com/back-to-denver-heights/>
- Gerlach, Jeremy T. (2014, September 3). "Denver Heights struggles for renewal in shadow of Alamodome" *San Antonio Express-News*. Accessed February 3, 2021. <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/communities/southside/article/Denver-Heights-struggles-for-renewal-in-shadow-of-5726960.php>
- Rodriguez, Marissa. (2017, May). "City Issues: A Spotlight on Denver Heights" *San Antonio Magazine*. Accessed February 3, 2021. <https://www.sanantoniomag.com/May-2017/City-Issues-A-Spotlight-on-Denver-Heights/>
- San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum (SAAACAM). "Education Timeline." *Vamonde*. Accessed January 25, 2021. <https://www.vamonde.com/posts/education-timeline/10447/>

Tavarez, Ileana J. (1995, October 1). "Frost, Thomas Claiborne (1833–1903)." *Handbook of Texas Online*. Accessed January 22, 2021.

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/frost-thomas-claiborne>

Stewart, Rhonda. "Sue Cowan Williams (1910–1994)." *CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas*.

Accessed March 16, 2021. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/sue-cowan-williams-4063>

Yancey, William C. (2013, May 15). "Kilpatrick, Madison (1829-1910)." *Handbook of Texas Online*. Accessed January 25, 2021.

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/kilpatrick-madison>

Manuscripts, Ephemera, and Other Archival Materials

Eusan, Wilbur T. (1982, July 16-18). [Program: Douglass High School Fiftieth Reunion of the Class of 1932], pamphlet, Claude and ZerNona Black Papers, 1890-2009, Coates Library, Trinity University. (accessed February 3, 2021).

<https://cdm16264.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16264coll1/id/1690/rec/7>

Ford, O'Neil. (1965, June 23). Urban Renewal Agency – Acquisition & Demolition. O'Neil Ford collection, Alexander Architectural Archives, the University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin.

[Funeral Program for Ira Kilpatrick Roberts]. (1987, August 28). Pamphlet, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History; crediting San Antonio Public Library. (accessed February 3, 2021). <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph226773/>

Greene, Maria Stevenson. (2018, October 12). [Program: 69th San Antonio Branch National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Freedom Fund Dinner], pamphlet, Private Collection of Mario Marcel Salas, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries. (accessed February 3, 2021).

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1261519/>

Neighborhood Discovery Tour [Ellis Alley]. (2001, January 30). Sterling Houston Papers, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections (Box 3, Folder 42). (accessed February 3, 2021).

<https://digital.utsa.edu/digital/collection/p15125coll9/id/32372>

Support Letter from Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff



NELSON W. WOLFF
COUNTY JUDGE
PAUL ELIZONDO TOWER
101 W. NUEVA STREET, SUITE 1019
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78205-3482
(210) 335-1326 • FAX (210) 335-2926
Email - nwoff@bexar.org

April 27, 2021

Texas Historical Commission
History Programs Division
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

Dear Markers Committee,

Bexar County supports the application and favors approval by Texas Historical Commission to designate both 301 Victoria Street and 601 North Pine Street in San Antonio as Registered Texas Historic Landmarks.

These locations served as the home and businesses of P.F. Roberts and his family. Robert's was a significant contributor to the African American heritage in San Antonio and Bexar County.

His leadership in business led him to be awarded business loans from the historic Frost Bank at a time before it was legal for African Americans to be loan recipients. Additionally, his participation in the Historic African American Baptist Settlement, and his support of the NAACP and other organizations contributed to the advancement of Civil Rights in Bexar County.

These nominations are supported by Ernest Qadimasil, a Roberts descendant and current owner of the property on N. Pine. The Victoria Street site is publicly owned by the City of San Antonio.

Together and individually, these properties represent an important part of the undersold stories and legacy of Bexar County's heritage.

Sincerely,


Nelson W. Wolff
Bexar County Judge

Petition to City of San Antonio



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
TRANSPORTATION & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

PETITION

TO: CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

DATE: 4-16-21

- Close, Vacate and Abandon (CVA) of Public Right of Way
Permits for Minor Encroachment onto Public Right of Way
Purchase of Surplus Property
Other:

OWNER/PETITIONER INFORMATION:

Name: (as shown on Deed)
Address: City: State: Zip Code:
Phone: Fax: Email Address:
Deed Document #: Book: Volume: Page Number:
NOTE: Attach deed of property with application. (If LLC, LTD, or CORPORATION, include Resolution of Corporate Authority documenting who is authorized to sign on behalf of the company.)

OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE INFORMATION:

Name: Anthony Firm Name: Vannette
Address: 501 W.César E. Chávez Blvd
City: San Antonio State: TX Zip Code: 78207 Phone: 817-908-2440
Fax: Email Address: anthony.vannette@utsa.edu

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

Property Address: 750 Block, E. César E. Chávez Blvd
Appraisal District Property PID #: Adjacent to 108020
NCB: 708 Block: 8 Lot: 28 CB:
Plat Book: Volume: Page Number: Document Number:

SITE DEVELOPMENT PLANS:

Project Development Name: Official Texas Historic Marker commemorating historic use
Fee Wavier Program #, if applicable: Fee Wavier Memo Attached: Yes No
Planned Use: Erecting an Official Texas Historic Marker describing the historic use of the property as the site of a commercial business significant to the history of San Antonio and civil rights. The marker will not accompany any historic designations. The exact size and shape of the marker will be determined by the Texas Historic Commission and it will be owned by the state.
NOTE: Attach development plans, site plans, conception drawings, profile/elevation views.
NOTE: If utilizing the Fee Wavier Program, a CCDO Fee Wavier Program Memo is required and must be submitted to TCL Real Estate. Please contact Pete Alanis at (210)207-3908 for further details.



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
TRANSPORTATION & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

PETITION

TYPE OF VACATION (CVA), if applicable:

Type of Vacation: Alley: _____; ROW: _____; Street: _____ Improved: _____ Yes No

Name of Alley/ROW/Street: _____

Purpose of vacation: _____

NOTE: All abutting property owners must sign consent.
NOTE: Include location map, plat, and survey.
NOTE: Metes and bounds survey of area will be required.

TYPE OF ENCROACHMENT, if applicable:

Encroachment Type: _____ Aerial _____ Sub-surface Surface

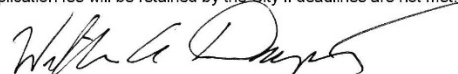
Description of encroachment to be placed on Public Property:
 One standard Official Texas Historical Marker to be designed and erected by the Texas Historical Commission.

Post approximately 6 feet tall with a sign approximately 18" w x 24" h.

Current encroachment prior to application: _____ Yes No

NOTE: INELIGIBLE items for permits: Obstruction to public passage, hazardous condition to vehicular, pedestrian, utility facilities, and/or other uses (e.g. drainage) of Public Right of Ways.
NOTE: Permits are for a period of 10 years and may be renewed or revoked at any time should it be determined that use interferes with City's use of the Right of Way.

The undersigned property owner understands: **1)** This application will be handled in accordance with standard City policies and procedures. **2)** No action will be taken without (a) payment of the nonrefundable processing fee, or (b) necessary documentation. **3)** The application and fee in no way obligate the City to vacate the subject area. **4)** All documents related to this transaction and a certified check for the appraised value must be delivered to the City of San Antonio prior to placing the item on the Council Agenda for final approval. **5)** The City of San Antonio will no longer place files on hold indefinitely. Inactive files will be closed and the application fee will be retained by the City if deadlines are not met. These applications shall be considered null and void.



 Owner Signature

PLEASE SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION AND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER FOR THE PROCESSING FEE (NON-REFUNDABLE) MADE PAYABLE TO THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO. FEE SCHEDULE IS AS FOLLOWS:

- \$100.00 PERMIT (MINOR ENCROACHMENTS)
- \$815.00 RIGHT OF WAY CLOSURE
- \$815.00 PURCHASE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

Return to: Kevin Sadler, Transportation & Capital Improvements, P. O. Box 839966, San Antonio, TX 78283
 Physical address: Municipal Plaza Bldg., 114 W. Commerce St., 8th Floor, Room 803



PETITION

ABUTTING PROPERTY OWNERS (REQUIRED FOR CLOSURE OF PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY ONLY)

ADDRESS: _____
NCB _____ BLK _____ LOT _____
OWNER(S): _____
PRINT NAME: _____
SIGNATURE(S): _____

By signing this petition, the above signed abutting property owner agrees to the closure, vacation, and abandonment of certain Public Right of Way as requested by the petitioner. However, this agreement is not a quitclaim of any entitlement that the abutting property owner may have in the Public Right of Way.

ADDRESS: _____
NCB _____ BLK _____ LOT _____
OWNER(S): _____
PRINT NAME: _____
SIGNATURE(S): _____

By signing this petition, the above signed abutting property owner agrees to the closure, vacation, and abandonment of certain Public Right of Way as requested by the petitioner. However, this agreement is not a quitclaim of any entitlement that the abutting property owner may have in the Public Right of Way.

ADDRESS: _____
NCB _____ BLK _____ LOT _____
OWNER(S): _____
PRINT NAME: _____
SIGNATURE(S): _____

By signing this petition, the above signed abutting property owner agrees to the closure, vacation, and abandonment of certain Public Right of Way as requested by the petitioner. However, this agreement is not a quitclaim of any entitlement that the abutting property owner may have in the Public Right of Way.

ADDRESS: _____
NCB _____ BLK _____ LOT _____
OWNER(S): _____
PRINT NAME: _____
SIGNATURE(S): _____

By signing this petition, the above signed abutting property owner agrees to the closure, vacation, and abandonment of certain Public Right of Way as requested by the petitioner. However, this agreement is not a quitclaim of any entitlement that the abutting property owner may have in the Public Right of Way.

*** SUBMIT ORIGINAL DOCUMENT ONLY. COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. ***

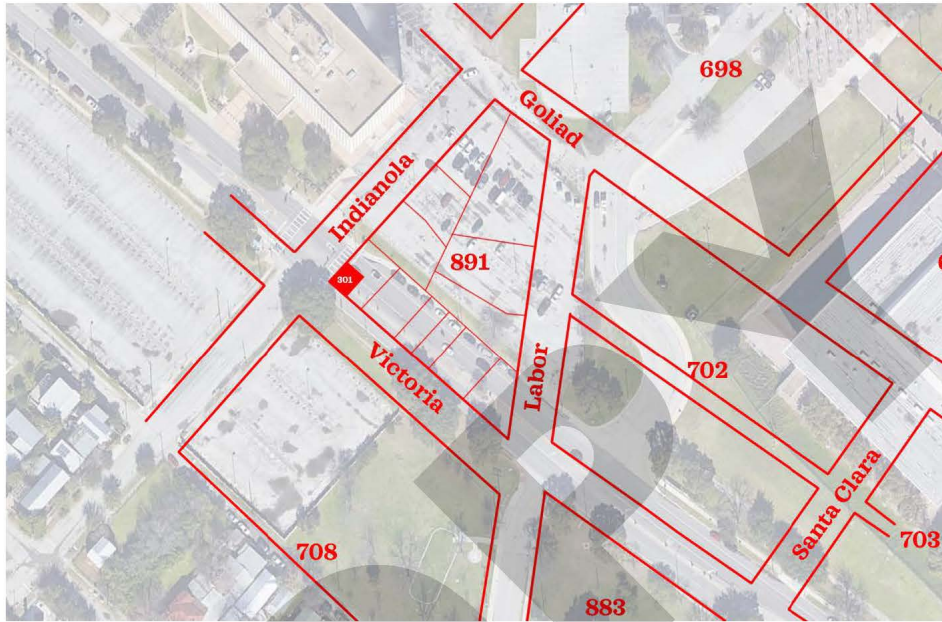
Proposed encroachment location:



Marker to be placed on the south side of 750 Block, E Cesar E. Chavez Blvd, in the city ROW adjacent to BCAD Property 535960 (north) or BCAD Property 108020 (south).

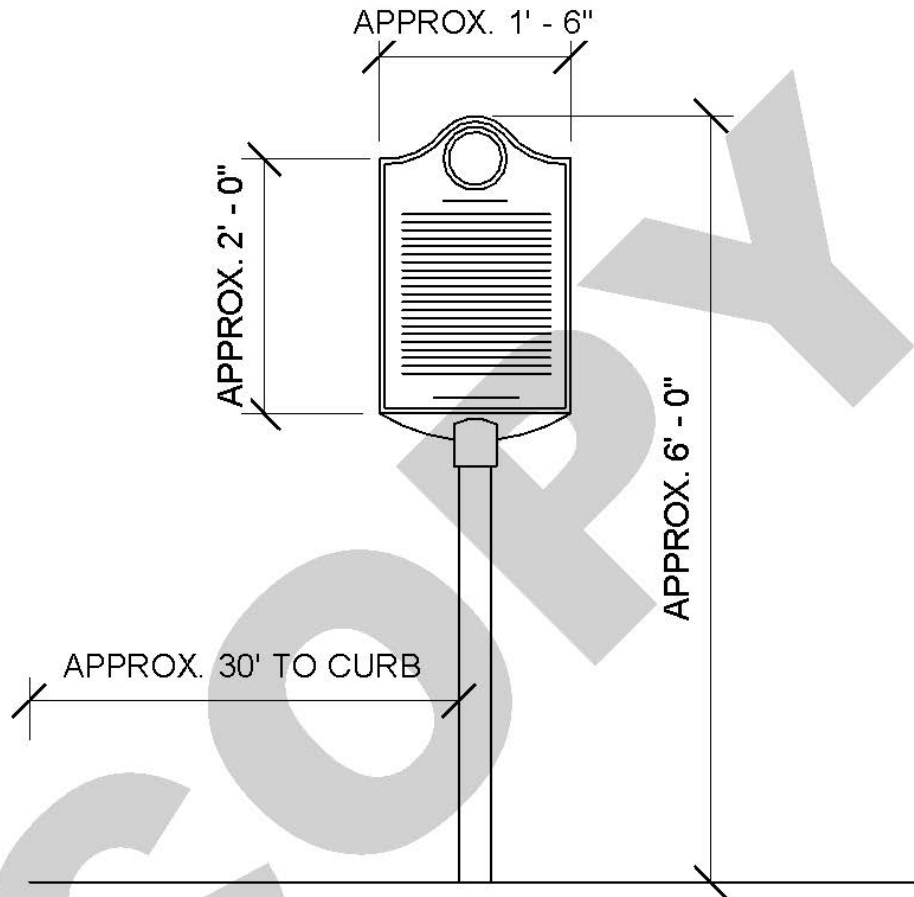
Preferred orientation is for the text to face southwest (or otherwise facing where a future sidewalk may be installed).

Historic street layout:



Marker should be located as close as feasible to the footprint of the historic building location at 301 Victoria (marked as red square).

Approximate marker size and proposed distance from Indianola Street curb:



Final dimensions to be determined by the Texas Historical Commission.

There are no curb cuts or other ingress/egress paths this side of the block and we do not anticipate impacting any existing infrastructure. The nearest curb cut on the block is on the west side of the parking lot approximately 120' south of the intersection.

Mockup of marker:



Final text and design to be determined by the Texas Historical Commission.