



*BEYOND*  
*ALL PRAISE*

## PREFACE

When asked to write a history of the Houston Group of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Texas, we agreed under the condition that it not be a thorough or comprehensive study but only a brief sketch - hence the title. We compiled what we wrote from information made available by the meticulous work of Geraldine Styles in putting together a nine-volume scrapbook history of the Houston Group from clippings, minutes, annual historian's reports, financial statements and other permanent records of the Society. These have been placed in the archives of the Houston Public Library. The real author of this history we feel is Geraldine. It is she who has loved the Society enough to preserve the story of its glorious past and significant present. It is with affection that this small and incomplete history is dedicated to her.

The full, complete story remains to be told. Perhaps this start will encourage others to take on what needs to be done. It is a challenge but from what we have learned should be a very satisfying one because there are significant accomplishments and outstanding participants. The Texas Society and the Houston Group have made a difference in our state and city. To the Dames themselves, both past and present, should be given final credit because it is their story.

*Frances Carruth Kerr*

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Mrs. James H. Kerr, Jr.

*Francita Stuart Koelsch*

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Mrs. Philip C. Koelsch

November 1, 1991

## BEYOND ALL PRAISE<sup>1</sup> . . .

A brief historical sketch of the Houston Group<sup>2</sup> of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Texas.

Houston was the first city in Texas to form its own local group of Colonial Dames. Before 1919 membership in the Society was on a statewide basis only. Austin had been designated in the Charter of February 21, 1898 as the domicile for the Dames. The first President, Mrs. Samuel M. Welch, even moved her residence from Dallas to Austin in order to manage the affairs of the Society more conveniently and effectively<sup>3</sup>.

The Society was originally organized by Mrs. Welch in response to an invitation in 1895 from Mrs. Howard Townsend of New York, then President of the NSCDA<sup>4</sup>. After more than two years of effort by Mrs. Welch, twenty-two ladies signed the 1898 Charter, beginning a conservative "organization. . . for the drawing together of women of congenial tastes, and opposing all discussion of religious, political, or other controversial subjects."<sup>5</sup> Two of the Charter members were from Houston - Miss Caroline Ennis Cargill (after 1902 Mrs. John A. McClellan) and Mrs. Benjamin F. Weems. Mrs. Weems was born Maria Carrington

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<sup>1</sup> Article II, Constitution, The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America. The objects of this Society shall be to collect and preserve manuscripts, traditions, relics, and mementos of bygone days; to preserve and restore buildings connected with the early history of our country; to educate our fellow citizens and ourselves in our country's history and thus diffuse healthful and intelligent information concerning the past, to create a popular interest in our colonial history, to stimulate a spirit of true patriotism and a genuine love of country, and to impress upon the young the sacred obligation of honoring the memory of those heroic ancestors whose ability, valor, sufferings and achievements are **beyond all praise**.

<sup>2</sup> This article was begun prior to the designation of groups as town committees.

<sup>3</sup> History of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Texas 1898-1936, Mrs. Francis L. Price, 3rd President of the Texas Society 1911-14, wrote this history at the request of The National Society that each corporate Society publish an account of its founding. Mrs. Price carried the project through the administration of Miss Mary Josephine Palm, 6th President 1913-30. Upon the death of Mrs. Price, Mrs. William Edward Darden, 7th President 1930-36, completed the history through the year of the Texas Centennial, 1936.

<sup>4</sup> On June 15, 1891 The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America was formed by a group of ladies from Philadelphia who were descendants of leaders in the original Thirteen Colonies. The National Society is composed of Colonial Societies from the Thirteen Colonial States and of Associate State Societies from the Non-Colonial States. Every member of every State Society is a Dame of one of the Thirteen Colonial Societies.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

in Virginia in 1850. When she was twenty-five years old, she came to visit her sister, the first Mrs. Joseph C. Hutcheson, in Houston where she met her husband. She was an active communicant of Christ Church - the oldest and for a long time the only Episcopal congregation in the city. Her husband served on the Vestry (1883-89, 1908-09); she, with the Ladies Parish Association (First Vice-President 1901-03). For many years she was President of the Board of the DePelchin Faith Home, started by a member of Christ Church and continued through the efforts of the ladies of the parish. Unfortunately, Mrs. Weems missed seeing the development of the Houston Group, which she helped found, as she died in 1920.

Mrs. McClellan lived until 1958. At her death she had been an active Dame for more than sixty years, during twenty-four of which she was a member of the State Board. At the age of 18 in 1898, she had been the youngest Charter member of the State Society. Her aunt, Mrs. A. H. Belo, of Dallas, was a neighbor of Mrs. Welch. Because of this friendship, not only was Mrs. Belo asked to be a Charter member, but her sister, Mrs. C. M. Lombardi, and her niece were invited as well. Born and reared in Houston, Mrs. McClellan was the granddaughter of Cornelius Ennis, who first came to the city in 1838<sup>6</sup>. He was a prominent cotton merchant, former Mayor (1856-57), and Vestryman at Christ Church. (1842, 1844-47, 1852-56) as was her father, Frank Cargill (1896-1904). Christ Church was always an important part of Mrs. McClellan's life. She was said to have been one of the finest Sunday School teachers the Church ever had. She served as Vice-President (1917-20) and President (1938-40) of the Ladies Parish Association. She gave her home to be a rectory for the Church.

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of Mrs. McClellan, not only to the Houston Group she helped found, but to the Texas Society as well. She was the first Corresponding Secretary for the Texas Society (1898), State Treasurer (1901-03), Vice-President (1927), and Chairman of the Houston Group.<sup>7</sup> She was in charge of the first state meeting in Houston in 1915. She contributed greatly to each state meeting held here in subsequent years.

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<sup>6</sup> The Handbook of Texas, Volume I, p. 568, Walter Prescott Webb and H. Bailey Carroll, Editors, 1952, Austin, The Texas State Historical Association.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to Mrs. McClellan, other chairmen of the Houston Group have been Mrs. Ralph Alexander, Mrs. Robert C. Chenoweth, Mrs. William A. Christian, Jr., Mrs. Clarence S. Eastham, Mrs. Albert B. Fay, Mrs. Wilmer Sperry Hunt, Mrs. Joseph C. Hutcheson, Jr., Miss Mary Kennedy, Mrs. Jeff Miller, Mrs. Joseph L. Lockett, Mrs. Court Norton, Mrs. Louis Pauls, Mrs. Jane Burton Pinckard, Mrs. Herman P. Pressler, Mrs. Willard W. Shuart, Mrs. Clifford T. Smith, Mrs. Samuel F. Styles, Mrs. Benjamin F. Thompson, Mrs. William Ward Watkin.

Other early members in Houston were (in the order that they joined the Society):

Mrs. William Carey Crane	1899
Mrs. Jeff Miller	1900
Mrs. Howard F. Smith	1902
Mrs. R. W. Knox	1902
Mrs. John W. Parker	1905
Mrs. Thomas A. Cargill	1907
Mrs. David Finney Stuart	1910
Mrs. Emmett Lee Perry	1912
Mrs. Welles Thompson	1912
Mrs. Wilmer Sperry Hunt	1915
Mrs. Henry Holt Lummis	1915
Mrs. Joseph C. Hutcheson Jr.	1916
Mrs. Henry C. Haden	1917
Mrs. J. F. Wolters	1917

When the Houston Group was formed in 1919, fifteen of these ladies, including Mrs. McClellan and Mrs. Weems, became the first members.<sup>8</sup>

The formation of the Houston Group was an outgrowth of a World War I project. These ladies had been rolling bandages together during the War, with Mrs. Jeff Miller as their leader. Mrs. Miller became the first chairman of the Houston Group. Mrs. Wolters as secretary sent to Austin the first report, which emphasized primarily the war-related projects that were the first important work undertaken by the Houston Group. There were 246 knitted articles sent to the Navy League; \$36.50 given for the support of a French orphan; \$10 sent to the same child as a Christmas present; \$25 contributed to the United War Work Campaign; \$10 given to Armenian Relief, \$10 to Jewish Relief, \$10 to the Education Fund, \$16 for 100 percent membership in the Red Cross drive. War Savings Stamps in the amount of \$1075 had been sold. The United War Work Campaign received \$1440. Concluding the report was a poignant comment, "When we returned from the pleasant annual meeting in Galveston last May, the future looked uncertain. Our boys were leaving for the battlefields of France. Beyond that we could not, dare not, see. Today, with one voice, the mothers of the nation offer prayers of thanksgiving for those sons who have been spared to return and to mourn for those who are left to sleep in Flanders Field where poppies grow." After receiving this report at the State Meeting, other cities (Austin, Dallas, Galveston and San Antonio), following Houston's lead, began to form their own groups.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Mrs. David Finney Stuart died in October, 1916 three years before the founding of the Houston Group.

<sup>9</sup> These five cities have continued to hold the majority of the membership in Texas. For that reason they are the nucleus of the nominating committee selected each year to choose the elected officers of the Society.

Before Houston had a group as such, it hosted a State Meeting.<sup>10</sup> On May 19, 1915, thirty-one members from various Texas cities met on the mezzanine of the Rice Hotel and were then shown the view of Houston from the Rice Roof. After preliminary greetings they "repaired to the private parlor on the third floor where the meeting was held. They adjourned to the Houston Country Club. There, Mrs. R. W. Knox made a charming address of welcome, and although unprepared, both Mrs. Price, President, and Mrs. Ayers, Vice-President, made pleasing responses. At 4 o'clock, the Dames adjourned to the veranda where coffee was served. The view of the grounds with their smooth green lawns and magnificent trees all at their best on that lovely spring day, made a picture - beautiful and refreshing. Then as a fitting finish to a very happy day, the Dames were taken for a visit to Rice Institute. Nothing could excel the cordiality of the Houston Dames whose only regret was that there were not more visiting Dames, and kind messages were sent to the absent ones."<sup>11</sup>

The annual meeting of 1915 mentioned for the first time a Houston project that would be occurring and reoccurring time and again over the years to come. Early on the Society chose education, and especially education in regard to history, as its first objective. The local Dames had attempted to start an annual essay contest in the public schools. Because they had not received the anticipated support from the Houston schools, they decided that the opportunity be given to a smaller town. For that reason the award was made to a student in Bay City where a member of the Houston Group, Mrs. Hally Bryan Perry, lived. By 1922, however, there was such enthusiasm among Houston students and the papers were so good that three additional prizes were added.

Houston ladies had served on the State Board since the founding of the Texas Society. During 1898, the first year of its existence when Mrs. Welch had been given the authority to appoint the first Board, Miss Cargill was chosen by Mrs. Welch to be Corresponding Secretary. She served in this position until 1904. Mrs. W. C. Crane, the third Houstonian to join the Society, was elected Third Vice-President in 1903 when Miss Cargill (now Mrs. McClellan) became Treasurer. They remained in these offices until 1905. For the 1905-06 year, Mrs. R. W. Knox succeeded Mrs. Crane as Third Vice-President with Mrs. McClellan remaining as Treasurer. Mrs. McClellan continued as a member of the Board of Managers serving a total of almost twenty-four years. In 1913, Mrs. Jeff Miller became Fourth Vice-President which office she held

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<sup>10</sup> Subsequently, May meetings have been held in Houston in 1924, 1933, 1940, 1952, 1959, 1966, 1973, 1981, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Minutes of the State Meeting of the Texas Society May 19, 1915, as preserved by Mrs. Samuel Farrow Styles in Volume I of her scrapbook history of the Houston Group, 1898 - 1980, donated to the archival collection of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

until 1924. Other early State Board members included Mrs. Howard F. Smith, who also served as a Vice-President as did Mrs. Henry C. Haden, Mrs. John W. Parker, and Mrs. Wilmer Sperry Hunt. Attending State Board meetings in Austin then was made especially pleasant because they always traveled in the private railroad car of Mrs. Miller. In ensuing years whatever the mode of transportation the Houston ladies were faithful in their attendance at State meetings in Austin in November and in other Texas cities in May.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to attendance at State meetings, members from the Houston Group from its inception participated fully in the projects of the State and National Societies. The first Dames undertaking to have permanent significance for Texas was the organization of a movement that led to the designation by the 27th legislature of the bluebonnet as the State flower. Many organizations were lobbying the legislature to promote various flowers one of which would be chosen as the official flower. Dames from Houston joined others, especially members in Austin, to urge the selection of the bluebonnet. There was no problem in the Senate. However, in the House the vote was close. State

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<sup>12</sup> Those who have served the Texas Society from Houston are:

*President:* Mrs. Albert B. Fay

*Honorary Vice-President:* Mrs. Samuel F. Styles.

*Vice-President:* Mrs. W. C. Crane, Mrs. Clarence S. Eastham, Mrs. Wilmer Sperry Hunt, Mrs. Joseph C. Hutcheson, Jr., Mrs. R. W. Knox, Mrs. Philip C. Koelsch, Mrs. Joseph L. Lockett, Mrs. John A. McClellan, Mrs. Jeff Miller, Mrs. Louis Pauls, Mrs. Clifford T. Smith, Mrs. Samuel F. Styles.

*Treasurer:* Mrs. Robert E. Clevenger, Mrs. John A. McClellan.

*Recording Secretary:* Mrs. Robert C. Chenoweth, Mrs. Willard W. Shuart, Mrs. Benjamin F. Thompson.

*Corresponding Secretary:* Miss Caroline Ennis Cargill, Mrs. Joseph L. Lockett, Mrs. Jane Burton Pinckard.

*Registrar:* Mrs. Philip C. Koelsch

*Historian:* Mrs. Samuel F. Styles, Mrs. Benjamin F. Thompson.

*Parliamentarian:* Mrs. Clarence S. Eastham, Mrs. Samuel F. Styles, Mrs. William Ward Watkin.

*Members of the Board of Managers:* Mrs. Ralph Alexander, Mrs. Burke Baker, Mrs. Robert C. Chenoweth, Mrs. William G. Christian, Jr., Mrs. W. C. Crane, Mrs. Clarence S. Eastham, Mrs. Albert B. Fay, Mrs. George W. Graves, Mrs. Henry C. Haden, Mrs. Wilmer Sperry Hunt, Miss Mary Kennedy, Mrs. James H. Kerr, Jr., Mrs. Philip C. Koelsch, Mrs. Alfred T. Krook, Mrs. Joseph L. Lockett, Mrs. H. H. Lummis, Mrs. John A. McClellan, Mrs. Jeff Miller, Mrs. Court Norton, Mrs. John W. Parker, Mrs. Louis Pauls, Mrs. Jane B. Pinckard, Mrs. Herman P. Pressler, Mrs. Lake Robertson, Jr., Mrs. Willard W. Shuart, Mrs. Clifford T. Smith, Mrs. Howard F. Smith, Mrs. William B. Spencer, Mrs. Thomas H. V. Storey, Mrs. Samuel F. Styles, Mrs. Benjamin F. Thompson, Mrs. William Ward Watkin, Mrs. Gordon R. West, Mrs. J. F. Wolters.

*Historical Activities Chairman:* Mrs. David C. Bland, Jr., Mrs. Samuel F. Styles.

*Patriotic Service Chairman:* Mrs. Henry C. Haden, Mrs. Joseph C. Hutcheson, Jr., Mrs. Philip C. Koelsch, Mrs. Alfred T. Krook, Mrs. Lake Robertson, Jr., Mrs. Gordon West.

Representative John Nance Garner, later to be Vice-President of the United States under Franklin Roosevelt, preferred the cactus pear blossom. The oil painting by Miss Mode Walker, now hanging in Austin in the Neill-Cochran House, helped turn the tide. The result was that when the "Bluebonnet Bill" was passed on March 7, 1901 Texas had an official State flower; the Dames received proper credit; and John Nance Garner was given the nickname that remained with him the rest of his political life - "Cactus Jack."<sup>13</sup>

Early National Dames projects received Houston support beginning in 1902 with the construction of the first patriotic marker in Arlington Cemetery to be given by a society of women. The marker honored soldiers and sailors who gave their lives in the Spanish-American War 1898-99<sup>14</sup> An early Chairman of the Texas State Patriotic Service Committee, Mrs. Joseph C. Hutcheson, was from Houston. Her husband, the Honorable Joseph C. Hutcheson, who represented Houston in the United States Congress and later was largely responsible for securing federal funds to build the Houston Ship Channel, was on the State Advisory Board for the Dames from 1898-1903. He was the only man from Houston ever to hold that position.<sup>15</sup> The Dames have been forever grateful to him for his wisdom and practical guidance of the Society during its earliest and most formative years.

Another early project under the aegis of the Historical Activities Committee was the restoration in 1907 of the 1640 Church at Jamestown, Virginia - one of the first Anglican churches built in America.<sup>16</sup> It stands today as an example of the care that has been taken in the preservation of significant structures of architectural and historical interest since the earliest days of the Society. Other important national projects to which Houston contributed were the placing in 1921 of a canopy over Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts to offer permanent protection to the historically significant but small, fragile stone; the creation in 1923 of an endowment fund for Sulgrave Manor, the ancestral home in England of George Washington;<sup>17</sup> assistance in the preservation of Kenmore and Wakefield,

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<sup>13</sup> Later, in 1931, the Houston Group under the leadership of Mrs. Ike Barton McFarland actively endorsed a bill which became law that was aimed at protecting wildflowers along Texas highways.

<sup>14</sup> During the Biennial meeting of the National Society in Washington there is an impressive ceremony held at the marker by the National Patriotic Service Committee.

<sup>15</sup> Throughout the history of the Houston Group, husbands and fathers have most generously helped their ladies.

<sup>16</sup> This was done to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Jamestown Settlement.

<sup>17</sup> The movement toward the restoration of Sulgrave Manor was begun as early as 1913 but was interrupted by World War I. Money was not raised nor restoration begun until 1923.



associated with the Washington family in America; the purchase of Dumbarton House in Washington in 1932 as the National Society Headquarters. Mrs. Wilmer Sperry Hunt and Mrs. John A. McClellan bought \$100 bonds to help purchase Dumbarton House.<sup>18</sup> Gifts from members of the Houston Group have always been made to all phases of the Dumbarton House restoration especially during specific fund raising campaigns. Mrs. Albert Bel Fay, the only Houston member ever to serve on the National Board (Corresponding Secretary) and as State President, chaired a highly successful effort in the late 1980's in which Houston made one of the largest contributions in the State.

Perhaps the most significant national project for members of the Houston Group has been the preservation of Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason, author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights that led to the adoption of the Bill of Rights for the United States Constitution. Following the acceptance of the custodianship of Gunston Hall by the National Society,<sup>19</sup> the State Societies were requested to appoint permanent Gunston Hall committees. Mrs. Henry C. Haden of the Houston Group, a Mason descendant, was chosen by the State Society as the first chairman of this committee in Texas. Throughout the rest of her life until her death in 1959, Mrs. Haden worked tirelessly to locate Mason descendants and to return to Gunston Hall as many of its original furnishings as possible. With the inspiration of Mrs. Haden, her daughter, Homoiselle Haden (Mrs. Albert B. Fay), served Gunston Hall for many years until her death in 1990. Mrs. Fay was the first Regent-at-Large chosen by the National Society from a state west of the Mississippi. Serving now as Regent of Gunston Hall is Mrs. Fay's daughter, Katherine Fay (Mrs. Frank C. Smith, Jr.), providing the third generation of family leadership. Another Mason descendant has served as First Regent. She is Sally Mason Eastham (Mrs. John E. Chapoton), a member of the Houston Group who resides in Washington.

Mrs. Haden was instrumental not only in helping preserve Gunston Hall but also in working on numerous important projects for the Dames both locally and on the State level as Patriotic Service Chairman.<sup>20</sup> Minutes in Houston for almost 40 years record Mrs. Haden's special

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<sup>18</sup> In keeping with the honorable ways that have always been a part of the Dames tradition, the bonds were later redeemed with full repayment made.

<sup>19</sup> In 1932, Mr. Louis Hertle, owner of Gunston Hall, deeded it to the Commonwealth of Virginia and designated the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America as custodians, the management to be vested in a Board of Regents named by the Society to function in an advisory capacity.

<sup>20</sup> Members of the Houston Group had previously supported the National Patriotic Service Committee project during the First World War by raising money to equip operating rooms on two hospital ships. Later during the Second World War they would make generous gifts to the USO Center at Ketchikan, Alaska, and in the Vietnam War provide ditty bags for servicemen.

endeavors - free milk, lunches,<sup>21</sup> school supplies, and clothing for underprivileged children during the Depression, educational scholarships and loans to worthy high school students throughout the period. Her caring concern for the needs of others has left a legacy of special importance to the Houston Group. As one scholarship recipient wrote "to you especially, Mrs. Haden, I wish to give my thanks and sincere admiration."<sup>22</sup>

The interest of the Houston Group in education has been apparent from the earliest days. The essay contest has taken place, been given up in frustration, and revived time and time again. The recipients have been from many different schools. In 1923, two prizes were awarded at Houston Heights High School because students at Central High had shown so little interest. Yet in 1924, there was increased participation in the essay contest. The recipient that year of the first prize, a five dollar gold piece, was Camille Openshaw whose scholarly paper was described as being splendidly handled by this young woman who hoped to study and practice law in Houston. Minutes of the Houston Group in 1935 report that Miss Openshaw had been admitted to the Bar. In 1931 the Houston newspapers pictured Margaret Tufts of Sam Houston High School, who won the first prize award of \$10. She won the State prize also for her article on the founding of Georgia, which was beautifully illustrated with pen and ink drawings.

An early literacy program was started in Houston by the Dames in 1928. A member of the State Committee for the Promotion of Literacy was Mrs. Court Norton. Members were urged to cooperate with educational organizations to eradicate illiteracy. A campaign of publicity, study of what other states were doing, and contact of legislative candidates to support efforts in this regard was undertaken.

The choice of Colonial History as a State project was an early one. In 1933, after many years of offering a prize at the University of Texas, a scholarship in Early American History was established. In 1953, a Scholarship Endowment Fund was started, with an annual award given to a graduate student in American History who plans to make the study and teaching of history his life work. Starting in 1991, the scholarship will alternate between different Texas universities.

The Houston Group has participated also in improving and beautifying the natural environment. For the celebration in 1932 of the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington the Dames planted

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<sup>21</sup> As late as 1940 the Dames gave to the Houston school lunch program. The Supervisor for Lunch Rooms for the Houston Public Schools assured the Dames that every cent of the money was used to good advantage.

<sup>22</sup> Letter of appreciation to Mrs. Haden for the loan from the Houston Group of \$25 for his education from Maurice Belt, 1939. His check of reimbursement was enclosed.

a beautiful magnolia on Buffalo Drive (Allen Parkway). In 1938 a pecan, grown from a cutting from a tree planted by Sam Houston in Huntsville, was placed on the San Jacinto Battlegrounds in honor of the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution.

From 1922 on the Houston Group has collected and distributed magazines, books, and games to military and civilian hospitals - first at Camp Logan, later at the Tuberculosis, St. Joseph's, and Veterans hospitals. This was an especially active program during and after World War II under the guidance of Mrs. Alfred T. Krook who became a member of the National Patriotic Service Committee.

In addition to its other interests the Houston Group has strongly supported preservation efforts in Austin. In 1951, The Daughters of the Republic of Texas invited the Texas Society to assist in the restoration of the historic French Legation, which was built in 1840 as the residence of the Charge d'Affaires from France to the Republic of Texas. The Society undertook to refurbish the parlor. A substantial sum was raised. The parlor was exquisitely and authentically furnished. Especially helpful in this were Mrs. L. T. Barrow and Mrs. Gordon West of Houston. Mrs. Samuel F. Styles as State Historical Activities Chairman was largely responsible for the success of the undertaking. For this and for her many other contributions to the Society her name was placed on the National Roll of Honor.<sup>23</sup>

In 1956, the Texas Society voted to investigate the possibility of acquiring an early Texas house to be restored and used as the Headquarters Domicile for the State Society. In 1958, the Neill-Cochran House, an 1855 Abner Cook colonial built of native Texas limestone, was purchased. In every phase of its restoration and preservation, the Houston Dames have been most generous. Mrs. L. T. Barrow was one of the four Dames named to the original committee for fund raising. She would later give to the house the beautiful French parlor set that had belonged to her mother, Mrs. Henry D. Thomson. Houston Dames have been particularly interested in collecting historic cookbooks which are housed in the Domicile library and in the gift of an Empire pier table that graces the entrance hall. The gates in the rear of the Domicile were given in memory of Mrs. Wilmer Sperry Hunt by her daughters, Mrs. Andrew S. Barada and Miss Lennie Hunt. With the purchase of the Neill-Cochran House the dream of a museum house headquarters was realized. Because of the dedication of the Austin Dames it has been lovingly cared for. The Centennial of the founding of the National Society will be celebrated there in November, 1991. For this occasion this brief history has been written.

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<sup>23</sup> The only other Houstonians to have been so honored are Mrs. John E. Chapoton, Mrs. Clarence S. Eastham and Mrs. Albert B. Fay.