

Sketch of the early plans for Cedar Lawn as a desirable subdivision
By Clark W. Thompson, a Cedar Lawn Founder
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A brief study of real estate development reveals that "subdivisions" are made and not born. It is rare that without farsighted planning a desirable neighborhood grows up by itself in any American city.

Galveston has been no exception. Here and there we find a block or row of nice homes, usually where some individual homeowner has in self defense bought up adjacent property and sold it only to his friends or desirable neighbors. Thru the block there are often shacks..

Among the most beautiful residential streets there are indiscriminate shacks, stores and mansions.

To get away from this condition Cedar Lawn was planned and developed. The location was chosen first because the inevitable growth of Galveston is westward, and second because the property owners in the surrounding districts expressed themselves as anxious to establish an exclusive residential area.

The Cedar Lawn promoters realized that the first requisite of an addition was a complete list of conveniences, and second, a definite plan of beautification. To fill the first need a contract was made with the Galveston Gas. CO. to pipe gas to all parts of the subdivision within the next ninety days. The Electric Company is already prepared to furnish electricity for both lights and cooking or refrigeration. Bond issues have been voted for water, sewage and drainage, and it is thought that ninety days will see all of these completed.

The question of beautification has been extensively worked out. The streets, instead of being laid out in straight lines, are for the most part curving, with two main drives coming together at a center garden fifty feet in diameter. Trees have been purchased and will be planted on the inside drives, and a heavy informal hedge of cedars, oleanders and palms will be planted around the outer borders. This hedge will close in the entire area and give it privacy and a much wanted seclusion.

Mainland soil will be spread over the whole subdivision and Bermuda grass planted.

The curbing and preliminary shelling operations are already complete. Paving will be laid as soon as possible.

While the lots in Cedar Lawn are not formally on the market, nevertheless numerous Galvestonians who have the pioneering instinct common to our fathers and grandfathers have seen the future of the place and have bought their property at the present low prices which will be only be available until the work has progressed a little further. Two homes are already well under way, and three more are in immediate prospect.

Every lot sold carries full restrictions to protect the homeowner. Among them are a seventy-five hundred dollar minimum for homes – provision for home to be built at least thirty feet from the street – that no wooden fences may be built except in the backyards – that every house must face one of the inside drives. In every possible way the promoters have insured a lasting neighborhood desirable in every respect.

The History of Cedar Lawn By Elizabeth Neff

In 1926, Cedar Lawn was platted by The Cedar Lawn Company. The original officers were W.L. Moody, III, president, W.D. Haden, vice president, and Clark W. Thompson, secretary and treasurer. The neighborhood was designed to be an enclave for the Moody family and officials of the Moody companies. Coincidentally, Mr. Moody and Mr. Thompson were brothers-in-law and Mr. Haden was Mr. Moody's father-in-law.

The Cedar Lawn Company purchased blocks 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39 of the Denver Resurvey from The Broadway Improvement Company for thirty seven thousand dollars. Blocks 58, 59, and 60 were purchased from The Galveston West End Company for eighteen thousand dollars. The boundaries of Avenue L, 48th Street, Avenue N, and 45th Street were finalized in October of 1926, and the authorization to sell lots was received. The front cover of this book illustrates an advertisement listed in The Galveston Daily News on February 6, 1927 stating "only 57 homesites left-act now, before it is to late." A unique feature of the streets in Cedar Lawn is that they are graded to drain into the center gutters, rather than gutters at each edge of the street. These nine blocks were replatted into a "butterfly" pattern, unique to the Southwestern United States, in the 1920's. It is a most distinctive neighborhood of eclectic homes ranging from smaller speculator-built homes to sprawling architect-design mansions. Developed as one subdivision, never to be added on to, the district exhibits a high level of cohesiveness. This elite residential real estate development of the mid-1920's raised the social status of the Denver Resurvey even as it radically inverted 19th-century approaches to urban residential place making.

The grand houses built during the first few years of the district's development document the prosperity of Galveston in the 1920's as well as setting the tone for the neighborhood. The continuous building through the Great Depression and the conspicuous absence of building during WWII also records Galveston's relationship to the events that shaped the 20th century. The continuation of ever-changing styles seen throughout the neighborhood signals the changing taste of affluent Galveston from the historic Revival styles before the Second World War to the prominent new structures of post-war modernism. Obviously, Galveston's westward expansion is due to the grade raising and the construction of the Seawall. Without this technology, the development of Cedar Lawn would not have taken place. The unmistakable break from the continuous grid sets Cedar Lawn apart from the simultaneous development in the city, and links the district to national trends of suburban development and planning. The influence of technology and the automobile, combined with this new suburban ideal, set the standards for developing Cedar Lawn.

Unlike the crowded fenced yards of Victorian Galveston neighborhoods, here the imposing green lawns grow unobstructed from the street to the foundation plantings around the houses. There are no sidewalks and no traffic signs, reinforcing the dominance of the "community within a community." The curved streets, abundance of mature oak trees, and the location of the houses on their lots, creates a shady, cozy feeling very unique to the Circle.

Twenty-seven homes were built in the first four years and eleven were completed between 1930 and 1941. The final 24 homes were constructed between 1940 and 1966. This neighborhood proved to be successful. Nevertheless, this "butterfly" pattern has never been copied anywhere else in Galveston. Research may confirm that a relative of Mr. Thompson told him about a similar "butterfly" pattern he had seen in Baltimore, Maryland between 1890 and 1915. Knowing that Mr. Thompson was going to settle down in Galveston, the relative is reported to have suggested to him that he and his future partners develop a neighborhood similar to the butterfly pattern he had seen in Baltimore. Nevertheless, Cedar Lawn is one of a kind; not only in its street design, but also in its rich history. The majority of the original homeowners played an important part in the Island's significant and entertaining past.

W. L. Moody, III

W. L. Moody, III was born in Galveston in 1894, a son of W.L. Moody, Jr. and Libbie Rice Shearn Moody. He entered the business world at an early age after completing his education. Mr. Moody was Executive Vice President of the American National Insurance Company and Vice President of City National Bank. He married Edna W. Haden, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Douglas Haden in 1916. They had three children, Mrs. Edna Haden Moody Myrick, Mrs. Virginia Shearn Moody Beardsley, and W.L. Moody, IV. W.L. Moody, III is an official in a great many companies and a director in more than twenty. At the age of thirty-four he was regarded as one of the leading financial and utility executives in the United States. Mr. Moody's business interests are in many fields. Among the most important are insurance, oil production, transportation, hotel operation, sulphur production, banking and newspaper publication.

Clark W. Thompson

Clark W. Thompson was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin in 1896. He actually was the third in his family to bear his name, but after relocating to Texas he apparently saw no need to distinguish himself from his father in Oregon or his grandfather in Minnesota by attaching "the third" to his name. He joined the United States Marine Corps in 1917, where his military tour brought him to Fort Crockett in Galveston. There he met Libbie Moody, the youngest child of W.L. Moody, Jr. and Libbie Rice Shearn Moody. They were married in 1918 in

Richmond, Virginia and had two children, Clark W. Thompson, IV and Libbie Moody Thompson.

He left active military duty after World War I, but kept close ties with the Marines by serving in the reserves. He was recalled to active duty during World War II and retired with the rank of colonel. The Thompsons returned to Galveston in 1919. He became treasurer of American National Insurance Company and later president of the Clark W. Thompson Company, a dry goods company. He entered his first political race and won his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1933-34. He became a candidate again after the war and won that and subsequent elections to serve in the House for 20 consecutive years, 1946-67.

Mr. Thompson retired from public office at the age of 70 and became a legislative affairs consultant for Hill & Knowlton, a Houston public relations firm. He also later directed the Washington office of the Tennessee Oil Company.

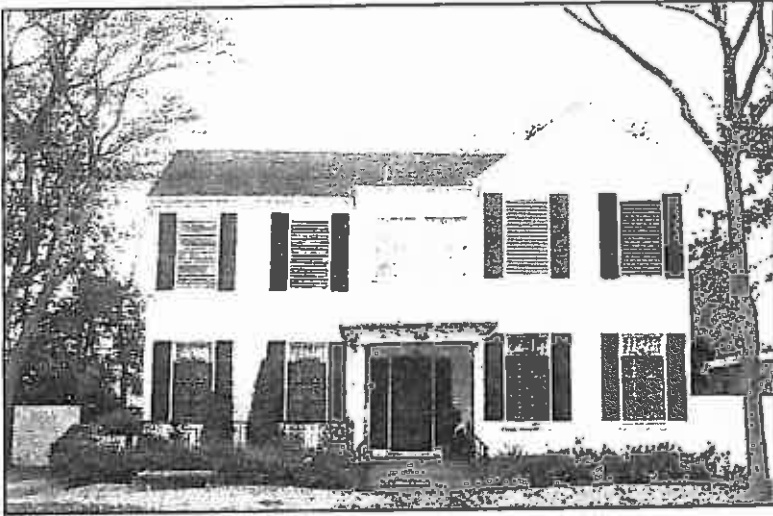
W.D. Haden

William D. Haden's first experience in business life occurred at the age of seventeen, when he purchased an interest in a small 10-ton schooner called the Mermaid. Next a small tugboat was acquired. Then, as brick was one of the most important articles of commerce on Cedar Bayou, he purchased two brick yards and operated them until 1907, when he moved to Galveston.

At this time, Mr. Haden embarked in the shell business, building one small dipper dredge. The business expanded and Mr. Haden built plants in Houston, Port Arthur, and Corpus Christi, as well as Galveston. He incorporated the W. D. Haden Company in 1925 and, in 1926, the Haden Building and Material Company was organized.

As the years went on, Mr. Haden began to manufacture lime from oyster shell. Located on Green's Bayou, this plant was one of the most modern lime plants in the United States. It was believed to be the only one of its kind in the world. In 1915, Mr. Haden organized The Galveston Island Transfer Company, a business of transferring cotton from compresses to shipside. He also started The Bay Towing Company and The Houston Towing Company in the early 1920's.

On January 3, 1896, W. D. Haden married Miss Lucy Lawrence. They had seven children: E. D. Haden, Mrs. Edna Haden Moody, C. R. Haden, Lila, Violet, Lucydeen, and Joey. At all times Mrs. W. D. Haden arranged the ideal home surroundings; and is thought by her husband to be equally responsible for the success of his businesses.

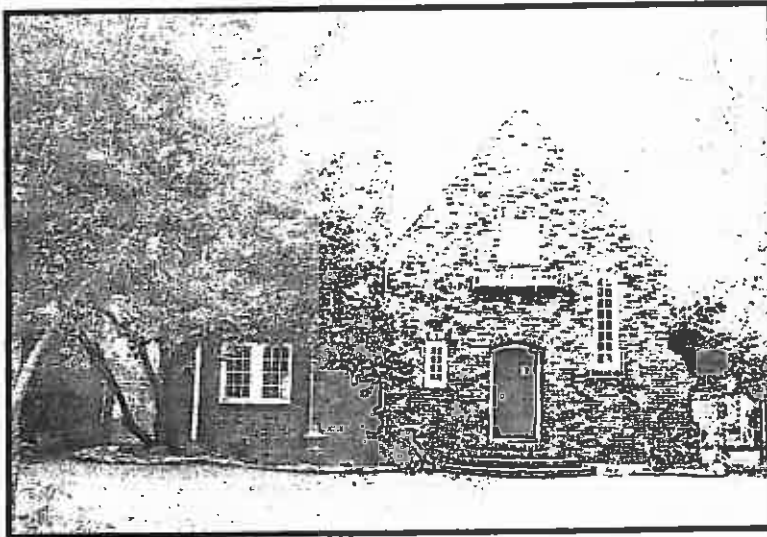


18 CEDAR LAWN SOUTH

The two-story Classical Revival style white stucco house at 18 Cedar Lawn South was built in 1936 for the J. W. Hamptons. Charles Oehler was the architect/builder. The cross-gabled, modified L plan house has a partial porch. The entrance portion of the house is covered by a second story sun porch.

In 1937, Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Schwiff purchased the home. Mr. Schwiff owned a meat packing business and butcher shop, and was also a cattle broker. In 1964, Judge Edward J. Harris and his wife June bought the home. An attorney, Judge Harris served as a Texas state representative in Austin before becoming judge of the 10th District Court. In 1994, when Judge Harris retired from the active bench, the Harrisese had a new garage built with an office and living quarters above it, which June Harris nicknamed "New Beginnings".

The Harrisese sold the home to David and Barbara Miller in 1997, and the Millers had extensive renovations done. The Millers sold the home to the current owners, Bryan and Linda Spires, in 2001.



46 CEDAR LAWN CIRCLE

In 1937, a two-story Tudor Revival style home was built for Roy J. Koehler at 46 Cedar Lawn Circle. The red brick veneer house has eight rooms and two baths. It was sold in 1938 to H. S. Crawford and his wife. In 1970, the house was sold to J. D. and Joyce Norred, who were teachers in the Galveston Independent School District.

In 1993, the home was sold to Drs. Stefan Kreuzer and Barbara Schroeder, who renovated and modernized the home, including having skylights installed in the roof. The current owners are Robert and Debra Panico.