

Ancient Homes In an Old City

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VICTORIA — Among the charms of this old Texas city are its many fine houses built long ago. Some have stood more than a century.

There are houses here built within a generation after the city's founding in 1824.

Some few have been converted to commercial use, but most are still private residences. They are carefully kept, gleaming in their ancient settings to reflect a sedate era when agriculture and a different social structure prevailed.

Additions and alterations have changed the face of some, but even then the original home remains the core of the present building.

EACH WOULD be a story itself, for many scores of years of living have gone into them.

Materials used in their construction range from brick manufactured before the Civil War in Victoria to cypress and pine shipped into the old port of Indianola and ox-carted the remaining 30 or so miles to Victoria.

Some were built at other towns, dismantled, and reassembled here piece by piece.

They weren't necessarily built in given subdivisions, so one might peep forth anywhere from its protective foliage, surrounded by little houses nestling near it or even business places that have come into being during the intervening years.

Most are multi-storied, big and white-painted. They are rather plain buildings, with few architectural decorations.

With the turn of the century and particularly after the discovery of oil in these parts, the elegance and elaborateness of homes in Victoria grew. But there are many homes here so much older than the gingerbread mansions that the latter-day houses are regarded as late comers.

WATCHING OVER the really old ones is the Victoria County Historical Survey Committee.

Twelve homes and four other structures have been marked with historical medallions. Many more homes qualify if the owners and residents wished such recognition.

Oldest of all is the Theobald Sengele Home, built in 1844 in what is now almost the heart of downtown Victoria. Sengele was a contractor and cabinet maker, and constructed his own brick, one-story house.

The French-speaking Sengele came into Victoria from Alsace through the port of Indianola. At 210 E. Forrest, the house is now owned by Henry J. Hauschild Jr., who operates a gift shop there.

A two-story home with an attic built by slave labor in 1851 of brick manufactured here is the Judge Alexander H. Phillips home at 705 N. Craig. It is now the home of Dr. and Mrs. W. W. Sale.

At 1505 N. Moody stands a house built in 1854 from hand-hewn pine lumber from New York State. It is the Callender Home, now occupied by Mrs. Eloise Callender Watson.

Dr. Stephen F. Cocke brought the pine to Texas to build a hunting lodge on the San Antonio River. He died, and his brother, Dr. Thomas R. Cocke, brought the material to Vic-

toria to build the present house for his daughter, Ella, and her husband, the Rev. J. M. Cochran of the First Presbyterian Church.

A MAGNIFICENT mansion occupied by Union officers during the Civil War is the Abraham Levy Home at 403 N. Main, built prior to 1861. It is a two-story frame structure with a basement and attic. Levy was an early Victoria businessman and banker.

The property is now owned by the John J. Welder heirs, Mrs. Joseph E. Moore and children, John J. Welder, and Mrs. Robert Earl Cliburn. The John J. Welder family resides there.

Not too far away in the heart of the downtown business district is the A. Goldman Home at 107 S. Liberty, now the site of the Victoria House Restaurant. Cypress and pine wood from Florida was imported for this house, built in 1865-66.

It is a one-story frame structure with a basement. Tom Cheatham is the restaurateur leasing the building, and Marvin F. Carruth is the owner. A Goldman was a businessman, cotton buyer, and dairyman, and it is said some of his dairying operations were conducted in the basement of the house.

About 30 per cent of the house's original glass windows are still in use.

A FEW BLOCKS north in the 400 block of North Liberty Street is the W. J. McNamara Home, built in the 1870s and now the home of the McNamara-O'Connor Historical and Fine Arts Museum.

Of rural Victorian Gothic design, it is a 1½-story frame building with a basement.

Among others marked with medallions are:

—The A. Lowe Home at 701 N. Washington, built by a former Victoria mayor, businessman, wheelwright, and pioneer in refrigerated shipping. The 1½-story frame home was constructed in 1883 at Main and East Commercial Streets, and was moved to its present location in 1950. It is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. A. B. J. Hammett.

—The Heaton Home at 307 S. Bridge, built in 1887 and now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Kamin. It is a two-story frame house with an attic, of colonial design.

—The D. H. Regan Home at 507 S. De Leon, now owned by the Miss Eleanor Regan Estate. It is not known when the two-story frame house, which has a basement, was built, but it is one that was moved piece by piece to Victoria.

The house was moved from Indianola after the 1886 hurricane there wiped out that thriving seaport some 15 miles southeast of the present-day Port Lavaca. The lumber is Florida pine, and the house reportedly was numbered piece by piece as it was dismantled so it could be exactly reproduced in Victoria.

Among other structures carrying the historical committee medallion in Victoria are the county courthouse, built in 1892; a wind grist mill in one of the local recreation areas; St. Mary's Catholic Church; and a band stand on De Leon Plaza downtown.

The bandstand is a frame, gazebo type structure built in 1885.



JUDGE ALEXANDER H. PHILLIPS HOME BUILT IN 1851
... constructed by slave labor with brick manufactured in Victoria



CALLENDER HOME CONSTRUCTED IN 1854
... built of pine brought from New York through old port of Indianola



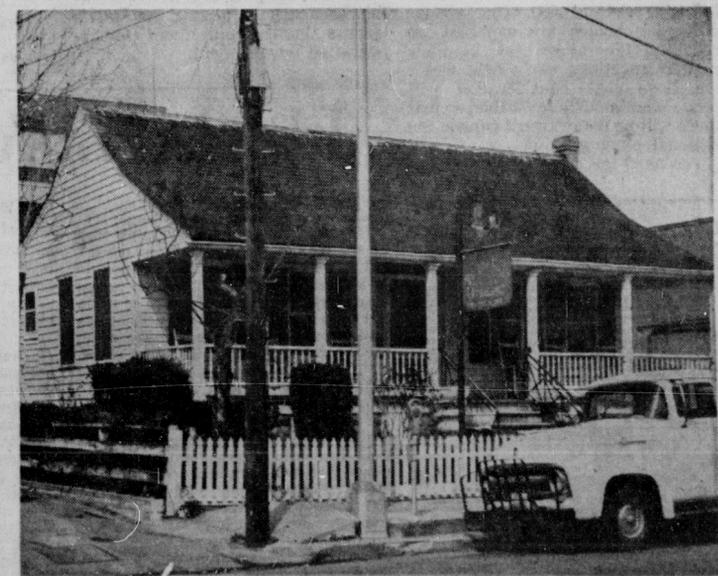
PRE-CIVIL WAR ABRAHAM LEVY HOME AT 403 N. MAIN
... occupied by Union officers during the war



THE THEOBALD SENGELE HOME, BUILT IN 1844, NOW A GIFT SHOP
... oldest house in Victoria constructed by cabinet-maker



W. J. MCNAMARA HOME, NOW A HISTORICAL AND FINE ARTS MUSEUM
... built in 1870s in a style called Victorian Gothic



A. GOLDMAN HOME, NOW A RESTAURANT
... built in 1865 of cypress and pine from Florida