

JAMES S. WATERS HOUSE

I. CONTEXT

The city of Galveston occupies a barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico. The island has a natural port which was utilized by pirates and Spanish explorers. After the Texas Revolution, a group of investors led by Michel Menard obtained ownership of the island and formed the Galveston City Company. The company platted the land and began selling lots in 1838. Throughout the nineteenth century, the city grew on the strength of the port as a medium for cotton exports and farm supply imports and by 1900, Galveston served as a center of banking for the southwestern United States. The downtown business district, with the Strand at its center, served as a particularly important commercial hub.

The East End Historic District lies on the northeastern portion of the island, immediately east of the downtown business district. The neighborhood was developing before the Civil War, but the busiest period of construction came during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when government and business leaders built large and architecturally significant dwellings. The list of Galveston figures who built houses in the East End during this period includes wharf president John L. Darragh, state legislator Walter Gresham, industrialists Gustav and John Reymerschoffer, wholesale grocer George Schroder, merchants John C. Trube and H.A. Landes, and county treasurer James S. Waters.¹

II. OVERVIEW

The James S. Waters House at 1116 Church was designed by Henry Collier Cooke of the firm Bourgeois Nitchner & Cooke. Cooke worked from an office at 2212 Market and his partners, L.J.B. Bourgeois and Herman Nitchner were based in Omaha, Nebraska.² Cooke was trained in his native England as well as Italy before immigrating to Iowa with his family in 1890. He came to Galveston in 1891 and in 1900 settled in Houston, where his firm designed its most notable works, including two sections of the Houston Ice and Brewing Company at 110 Milam Street and 719 Franklin Avenue and the William R.

Nash House.³ In an 1893 announcement in the Galveston Daily News, Cooke invited area builders to bid on the contracts for several projects, including “Twelve Two-Story Residences.”⁴ One of these residences may have been the one that that Cooke designed for the family of James S. Waters.

James Stephen Waters was born February 13, 1854 in New Orleans to Charles M. Waters and Ann Moore.⁵ By 1872, Charles had moved to Galveston and in 1874, James is listed as residing at the corner of Market and 9th Street.⁶ Upon relocating to Galveston, James worked for Neill Brothers and Company (later Neill and Todd), cotton brokers operating from 205 Strand.⁷ During the 1870s and early 1880s, he gained business experience working for Peoples Railroad Office⁸ and as a clerk at C.E. Richards, a cotton broker with headquarters on the Strand in the downtown business district.⁹ In 1886, Waters partnered with Charles M. Manson to form a fire and marine insurance agency. Mason & Waters operated from offices at the northeast corner of Strand and 22nd Street until 1891,¹⁰ when James’ expanding role as a business leader led him to take on other responsibilities.

In 1886, James was elected treasurer of Galveston County, an office he would hold for the next sixteen years.¹¹ He ran as the democratic nominee and the Galveston Daily News stated that he had defeated his opponent, the incumbent, due to a “sentiment strongly manifested by the present election to have a new deal in county affairs.”¹² The government position appears to have increased his standing in the Galveston business community as his tenure coincided with a period of remarkable activity. He held the offices of assistant secretary, secretary, and then general manager of the Texas National Loan and Investment Company during the period from 1891 to 1902. Overlapping this tenure, he served as president of the Santa Fe Investment and Loan Company (1895-1904), as treasurer and secretary of the Galveston Trading Company (1901-1902), and as treasurer of the Galveston Investment Company (1903-1904). Near the turn of the century, he became involved in the growing oil and gas industry. He served as president of the US Gas Saving Company (1896-1898), secretary of the Gulf Coast Refining Company (1901-1902), and secretary and treasurer of the Eureka Oil Company. During the same period, he was an agent for Inman

Line Steamships (1891-1895) and the American Line of Steamships (1896) and vice president of the F. Cannon Commission Company (1899-1902).¹³

In November of 1889, Waters married Violet Hinkle, a native of Cumberland, MD.¹⁴ The couple had three sons, James Jr., William, and Fenelon.¹⁵ In January of 1891, Waters purchased lot 11 and the east ¼ of lot 12 in block 431 from Mrs. S. A. Oherron of Youngstown, Ohio, for sum of \$3250.¹⁶ On this land, the couple hired Cooke to design the building that would house their family and their descendants for over 120 years. Waters also invested in other properties in the area. In addition to owning house at 1116 Church Street, he also purchased 1109 Church, 1117 Church, 1121 Church and 1125 Church, all in block 371.¹⁷

The house that Cooke designed for 1116 Church is the most prominent building on the block and it represents elements of the style that were popular at the time of its construction. In particular, the curved porches and inset front entrance have other precedents in Galveston architecture of the period. An 1899 eastern addition, built to house the growing Waters family after Waters purchased a neighboring lot, shared some of these characteristics, but was distinguished by the relative lack of depth of the inset porch features and by the tower extending at the rear of the roof.

With the addition and the expansive lot, the Waters House cemented its pre-eminence on the 1100 block of Church. This, in addition to Waters' ownership of adjacent properties, reflects his position as a prominent Galveston figure at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the end of his tenure as country treasurer in 1902, however, that position appears to have weakened. After leaving office, he remained active but never again held office for a loan and investment company. He served as district manager of the Manhattan Life Insurance Company (1905-1907), agent of the Boston Woven Hose and Rubber Company (1906-1910), and local salesman for the Peden Iron and Steel Company (1906-1907). From 1911 until his death, he was an accountant and notary.¹⁸

After James Sr. died of chronic nephritis in 1923,¹⁹ Violet lived in the house with William and Fenelon, the two younger sons. Violet and Fenelon shared the house through the 1920s and 1930s, joined

by Fenelon's wife Constance beginning in 1932. In 1945, Fenelon and Constance moved out and William and his wife Haydee moved in to share the house with Violet.²⁰

William Alpheus Waters was born in 1899²¹, married Haydee Marie de Lassus, and had two children, William Alpheus Jr., born in Austin, TX, and Haydee Marie. Shortly after the birth of William Jr., the family moved into the house at 1116 Church. William Sr. worked in Galveston for Standard Dredging Corporation, earning the title of vice president.²² At an unknown point in the mid-twentieth century, William Sr. had the tower of the eastern addition removed due to a persistent roof drainage issue.²³ The family also made interior modifications to the second story. Violet died in 1955²⁴ and William Sr. in 1983.²⁵ Afterwards, William Jr. lived in the house with his widowed mother until Hurricane Ike of 2008. The family sold the house in 2014 to Michael and Kelli Anderson, who commenced a rehabilitation project which includes the reconstruction of the tower on the eastern addition.

III. SIGNIFICANCE

The two areas of significance for the East End National Historic Landmark District are architecture and outstanding community leaders. The 1976 nomination recognizes the district's density of Victorian and Greek Revival architecture examples, including large buildings built for prominent figures and smaller back buildings and alley houses.²⁶ Owing to the Waters Family's stable ownership, the James S. Waters House represents one of the neighborhood's least altered examples of Victorian architecture as it retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

After the 1899 eastern addition, the family made few changes to the building. Most notably, the family removed the tower of the east addition. They also reconfigured the rear entrance and a portion of the second floor were altered at some point during the mid-twentieth century. Other than those changes, interior and exterior details were retained to a remarkable degree. The new owners have initiated a project to reconstruct the tower using historic photographs to inform the design. The back building, which predates the Waters House, was subject to more substantial alterations yet retains integrity of location,

design, setting, feeling, and association. On the building's interior, elements of its materials and workmanship are also evident.

As a prominent example of Victorian architecture, built for the treasurer of Galveston County during the 1890s and 1900s, and accompanied by a smaller back building, the Waters House embodies the most historically significant characteristics of the district. In a city with a large and celebrated collection of historic architecture, it is particularly strong example of an important time period in the Galveston's history.

¹ Pitts, Carolyn. "National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Galveston-East End Historic District." Galveston, Galveston County, TX, National Register #75001970. February 1976.

² "Galveston City Directory, 1890-1891." Preservation Resource Center, Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF), Galveston, TX.

³ "National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Nash, William R. House." 215 Westmoreland Ave, Houston, Harris County, Texas, National Register #90001293. 23 August 1990.

⁴ "To Contractors." *The Galveston Daily News*; Monday, June 6, 1892, *Newspaper Archive Web*. 29 September 2014.

⁵ "Former County Official Dies." *The Galveston Daily News*; Tuesday, December 18, 1923, p. 4, *Newspaper Archive Web*. 13 October 2014; "State of Texas Standard Certificate of Death, James S. Waters." Texas State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Register District Number 035619, File Number 686.

⁶ "Galveston City Directory, 1874." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX.

⁷ 1874 Galveston City Directory; "Galveston City Directory, 1875-1876." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX.

⁸ "Galveston City Directory, 1876-1877." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX.

⁹ "Galveston City Directory, 1877-1878." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1878-1879." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1880." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX.

¹⁰ "Galveston City Directory, 1886-1887." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1888-1889." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1890-1891." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX.

¹¹ "Former County Official Dies," *The Galveston Daily News*; 1886-1887 Galveston City Directory; 1888-1889 Galveston City Directory; 1890-1891 Galveston City Directory; "Galveston City Directory, 1891-1892." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1893-1894." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1895-1896." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1896-1897." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1898." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1899-1900." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1899-1900." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1899-1900." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1901-1902." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX.

¹² "Galveston County Returns." *The Galveston Daily News*; Thursday, November 4, 1886, p. 5, *Newspaper Archive Web*. 2 October 2014.

¹³ 1890-1891 Galveston City Directory; 1891-1892 Galveston City Directory; 1893-1894 Galveston City Directory; 1895-1896 Galveston City Directory; 1896-1897 Galveston City Directory; 1898 Galveston City Directory; 1899-1900 Galveston City Directory; 1901-1902 Galveston City Directory

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- ¹⁴ "Wedding Chimes." *The Galveston Daily News*; Thursday, November 28, 1889, p. 6, *Newspaper Archive*. Web. 3 October 2014; "Mrs. Violet Hinkle Dies Here at 85." *The Galveston News*; Monday, December 5, 1955, p. 15.
- ¹⁵ "Former County Official Dies," *The Galveston Daily News*.
- ¹⁶ Galveston County Deed Records, Book 91, p. 297.
- ¹⁷ Insurance Record for 1116 Church, Texas History Center, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas.
- ¹⁸ "Galveston City Directory, 1905." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1906-1907." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1908-1909." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1909-1910." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1911-1912." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1913." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1914." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1916." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1919." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX. "Galveston City Directory, 1921." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX.
- ¹⁹ Certificate of Death, James S. Waters. Texas State Board of Health.
- ²⁰ "Galveston City Directory, 1924-1925." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1928-1929." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1930." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1932-1933." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1936-1937." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1939." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1941." Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX; "Galveston City Directory, 1945-1946."
- ²¹ "United States, World War One Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918, William Alpheus Waters." Database with Images. *FamilySearch*. <http://FamilySearch.org> : accessed 2014. Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.
- ²² "Obituaries." *The Galveston Daily News*; Wednesday Morning, September 28, 1983, p. 4-A, *Newspaper Archive*. Web. 3 October 2014.
- ²³ Personal Statement by Haydee Waters, May 9, 2006. Preservation Resource Center, GHF, Galveston, TX.
- ²⁴ Mrs. Violet Hinkle Dies Here at 85, *The Galveston News*.
- ²⁵ Obituaries, *The Galveston Daily News*.
- ²⁶ National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Galveston-East End Historic District.