TWO ENFIELDS

A PERSPECTIVE

By Dr. Fred McGee

I grew up in Enfield, Connecticut and attended Kosciuszko Junior High School and Enrico Fermi High School in the 1970s and early 1980s. At the time Enfield had two junior high schools and two high schools. My first visit to Austin was a brief stay-over at Bergstrom Air Force Base in 1993 while serving as a Special Operations officer in the U.S. Navy. At the time I looked upon the familiar place names I encountered on street signs in the western part of Austin—“Enfield,” “Windsor,” “Hartford”—as little more than a curiosity. It was not until two years later, when I began my anthropology graduate studies at the University of Texas in Austin, that it became clear the connections between my hometown and Austin were more than incidental. I eventually learned the connection to my Connecticut hometown was a former legislator.

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Woodlawn, the longtime home to Governor E. M. Pease and his family, was built in 1853 by Abner Cook for state comptroller James Shaw. After tragedy struck Shaw’s family, he sold the estate to Gov. Pease in 1857, and the Pease family lived there until 1957, when Niles Graham, Pease’s grandson, sold the home to Governor Allan Shivers. Local artist Edna Collins painted this watercolor rendering of the home as a wedding present for Julie Graham, Pease’s great granddaughter, in 1945.

The painting is one of six paintings recently donated to the Austin History Center through a generous gift from Lucy Hibberd. The paintings originally hung in Woodlawn and were held by Pease descendants until being offered for sale in 2004. Ms. Hibberd generously offered to purchase the paintings for the AHC, adding to the flagship Pease papers collection here, and also paid to have the paintings restored. Four of the other paintings, all portraits of Pease family members, are currently on display in the AHC Reading Room, and the AHC extends its heartfelt thanks to Ms. Hibberd for her generous gift to the AHC and the City of Austin.

Waterloo Press Publishes Philanthropy Photo Book

By Kathleen Davis Niendorff and Jena Stubbs

Austin: The Faces of Philanthropy, 1976 – 2011, is a photographic documentary by Robert Godwin, the Austin photo-journalist for thousands of events during this period. This “coffee table book” is a valuable record of charitable events and the Austinites who have organized and participated in those philanthropic endeavors for the 37 year period. The book will first be available for purchase at the AHCA’s Eberly Luncheon, Driskill Hotel, February 6, 2013. Godwin will be available to sign the book at that time.

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ANGELINA EBERLY LUNCH Honors Three Mayors

By Beth Fowler

Former Austin Mayors Bruce Todd, Will Wynn and the late Roy Butler will be honored at the annual Austin History
Godwin has donated a large portion of his photographs to the Austin History Center. The historical value of this book is the documentation of one of the primary threads that ties Austin together: the high value placed on giving and doing for others and the common good. The past four decades have seen the creation of the Dell Children’s Hospital, Long Center for the Performing Arts, Butler School of Music, and continued support for Caritas, Ronald McDonald House, People’s Community Clinic and many other organizations. “The growth of philanthropy in Austin has been such that there are now organizations teaching young professionals how to be wise philanthropists,” Godwin said.

“Waterloo Press is proud to work with photojournalist Robert Godwin and publish this book,” said Jeff Cohen, AHCA executive director. “We hope past generosity inspires a great new era of Austin philanthropy.” The book will be organized with photographs in 5-year segments of the period, 1976-2011.

Godwin said, “I have a photo of almost everybody who did anything philanthropically during that time.” His total collection contains almost 500,000 images. Mixed with the photographs will be short vignettes by Godwin of his poignant, humorous and profound experiences in relating to the people who populate the book.

The foreword is written by Jane Sibley; the introduction by Mary Margaret Farabee. Both women have been outstanding philanthropic movers and shakers in Austin and Central Texas.

**At the Eberly Luncheon on Feb. 6th, Waterloo Press will offer books about the Pease family “Lucadia Pease and the Governor” and “Pease Porridge Hot” with Jeff Kerr’s popular collection of Indian tales “The Republic of Austin.”**

**Eberly from Page 1**

Center Association Angelina Eberly Luncheon. Charles Betts, executive director of the Downtown Austin Alliance, will serve as the moderator for a round-table discussion with the Mayors about the “Highlights, Anecdotes & Laughs” during their terms in office. The round-table presentation will occur Wednesday, February 6, 11:30 AM, at The Driskill.

Funds raised will go to the Austin History Center Association, the supporter of the Austin History Center’s archives for Austin and Travis County.

The historic Eberly luncheon welcomes business people, city leaders, newcomers and longtime residents who love Austin, its history, and its history-in-the-making. “Everyone at the luncheon has a great time and gains an awareness of where Austin has been,” said Ann Dolce, president of the Austin History Center Association. “We hear from former city leaders how the past has contributed lessons for the present, and how preserving these at the Austin History Center assists our future.”

In keeping with the fact that Angelina Eberly was an innkeeper, the annual event in her name at The Driskill reminds guests of a time-honored hotel location in Austin. Bullock’s Hotel operated at the corner of Pecan (Sixth) and Congress in the 1830s. In the book “Capitols of Texas,” Seymour V. Connor described “west of the 1830s. In the book “Capitols of Texas,” Seymour V. Connor described “west of
From the Archivist

The Wayne Gronquist Papers

By Michael C. Miller, CA - Archivist

Though people often hear how crowded our building is with archival material, history marches on, and we continue to acquire new and interesting collections. One new collection of note is the Wayne Gronquist Papers. Gronquist was one of the founding members of the Save Barton Creek Association (SBCA), and these records provide rich research material about the environmental movement in Austin. One only has to pick up the newspaper and read headlines about the fights over developments on or near the Barton Creek Watershed, or issues surrounding the status of local salamanders and their protection, to realize how important it is to document these movements. The Gronquist Papers collection is processed and ready for researchers, and an inventory is available online at: www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/aushc/00319/ahc-00319.html

The Gronquist Papers are also noteworthy because its donation to the AHC represents one of the ways that the Austin History Center Association (AHCA) supports the AHC’s work. When the collection was offered to the AHC, the SBCA Board offered to provide a small grant to help process the papers. The AHCA acted as the fiscal agent for the grant, and we received $1000 to hire a short-term project archivist to process the papers and to purchase the necessary supplies. Having the ability to hire a person to work on a collection is a great benefit to the AHC and streamlines the process from donation to processed collection. Having a support group like the AHCA allows these kinds of grants and partnerships to occur.

Staffing is always an issue at the AHC, and more important collections are acquired than we have the staff to process. The ability to hire even temporary help goes a long way in improving our service to researchers. Now I’m not saying that we only process collections that come with monetary donations – the AHC will always work hard to make its collections as accessible as we possibly can – but the work we do is always, and always will be, labor intensive. One of my long term goals in working with the AHCA is to continue to explore opportunities to increase staffing at the AHC in creative ways so we can better serve the Austin community.

I’ll close my column this time by inviting you to drop me a line if you are interested in knowing more about our work at the AHC. I view this column as a conversation with those who are interested in our work and the work of the AHCA, and conversations are only good if they are two-sided. Please feel free to send me an email (mike.miller@austintexas.gov) or give me a call at the Austin History Center (512-974-7436).
Located along the Connecticut River, the settlement known as Enfield was originally surveyed in 1679 by a committee from Springfield, Massachusetts. The first settlers arrived from Salem, Massachusetts in 1681 and established the town of Enfield in 1682. One of the original settlers was E.M. Pease's great-grandfather, John Pease. Boundary disputes existed between the Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies for many years. In 1749 the town seceded from Massachusetts and was annexed to Connecticut.

The early history of Enfield is a strongly religious one. The town was a center of English religious revivalism and hosted important religious sects such as the Shakers. Jonathan Edwards, an important figure in the First Great Awakening, first preached his well-known sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" on July 8, 1741, in Enfield. Numerous Enfield sites and place-names commemorate Edwards.

The Revolutionary War shook Enfield to the core, yet by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the Shaker community had revitalized the town into an important center of agriculture in western New England. Thousands of pounds of butter and cheese were produced annually, and in 1802 the Enfield Shakers became the first community in America to grow, harvest, prepare, and sell packaged seeds. The Enfield that E.M. Pease left behind to come to Mexican Texas in 1835 was regarded as home to some of the best seeds in America.

During the nineteenth century, Enfield became a classic New England manufacturing town. In 1828 Orrin Thompson launched the town's first carpet mill, and his namesake area Thompsonville identified an important part of Enfield. The carpet industry remained vibrant as the Civil War and rising numbers of soldiers and sailors produced an economic upturn in the town. Enfield rifles became standard issue for Union troops, and gunpowder manufactured at the Powder Hollow plant in Hazardville was key to the Union War effort.

The nineteenth and twentieth century textile and munitions plants left behind a powerful industrial imprint on the city, but even during its production heyday, Enfield maintained the feel of a town, not a city. I have fond recollections of playing with my schoolmates and friends in long-abandoned manufacturing offices, warehouses, and unused railway stations, and of climbing the creaky and unsafe ladders of once tall and powerful chimneys. These were the dilapidated remnants of the Enfield that attracted Polish, Italian, French Canadian, and African American migrants to this portion of the Connecticut River Valley throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

By the mid 1970s, a collapse in Enfield’s industrial base became apparent. The transition to a post-industrial economy was tough. The city managed to attract the Danish company LEGO, which located its North American headquarters in Enfield. During my childhood, LEGO stood out as one of the town’s premiere employers, alongside longtime manufacturing companies such as Smith & Wesson in Springfield and Colt Firearms in Hartford. The population hovered around the 50,000 mark for years before a slow decline. According to the Census Bureau, in 1970 the town's population was 46,189. Thirty years later, in 2000, Enfield’s population stood at 45,212. The 2010 census estimated population at 44,654, and the Enfield School Board announced the local high schools “Enfield” and “Enrico Fermi” will merge due to the decline.

English Colonial Landmarks

The Enfield, Connecticut of 2012 contains some of the finest English colonial architecture in the United States, particularly religious and residential structures. In 1972 a local historic district was established running along approximately two miles of Enfield Street, the town’s main North-South thoroughfare. This part of town was formally entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.
One house, located at 1203 Enfield Street was at the time owned by Howard S. Pease and his wife Mildred, members of the Pease kin.

Another historic house, unfortunately omitted as a contributing structure in the 1979 National Register inventory, is the home located at 1221 Enfield Street, otherwise known as “The Beeches.” The house is famous for being the family residence of one of the twentieth century’s most famous African Americans, the great singer, actor, lawyer, All-American football player and civil rights activist Paul Robeson. His son Paul Robeson Jr., attended Enfield High School and serves as the archivist, translator and curator of the Robeson Archival Collection.

Also noteworthy is the Anderson House, located at 1380 Enfield Street. Built in 1702 by the founders of Enfield, the house was passed down through the family and was eventually owned by Ephraim Pease, the grandson of Robert Pease. Ephraim Pease was a merchant, slave owner and representative in the Connecticut General Assembly. He was a contractor for the U.S. Army during the French and Indian wars and later became a very successful merchant. He acquired a large estate for his day and became the wealthiest man in town. Ephraim was also a slave owner, an issue which rattled the household because his daughter Sybil’s husband, the Reverend Elam Potter, was an early abolitionist. Ephraim Pease died in 1801 at age 81. It is possible that George Washington once slept in the house, which also held Hessian prisoners during the Revolutionary War.

These days when driving through Austin’s Old Enfield neighborhood, I’m struck by the conspicuous wealth and fine stately homes on display, but I also think about some of the neighborhood’s similarities and differences with the town for which it is named.

The residential architecture of both the Old West Austin Historic District and the Enfield Historic District in Connecticut consists largely of the homes of elites, leaders in business, industry, and politics. For instance E.M. Pease’s 1853 mansion bears considerable resemblance to many of the Greek revival structures still standing in the Enfield Historic District in Connecticut. The primary difference, of course, is that the Pease Mansion was also designed as a plantation big house, with slaves working as servants and in the fields whereas slavery had been abolished in Connecticut by the early 1850s. It was an issue that split the Pease family, as it did with many Texans who had settled the Lone Star State from New England.

Austin’s “Old Enfield”

The “Old Enfield” portion of the Old West Austin Historic District also contains a greater diversity of residential architecture styles, particularly varieties of Spanish Colonial homes. Understandable, given the importance of Spanish and Mexican influence in Texas. On the other hand, early to mid-twentieth century suburban construction in Enfield Connecticut was largely done to accommodate the town’s working class and immigrant labor base of French Canadians, Italians, Poles and others who migrated to Enfield to work in the town’s factories, an important aspect of the regional history of New England. However even some of these working class homes, particularly those close to Enfield Street, were built in a colonial or colonial revival style where possible.

Although I spent my formative years in Enfield, Connecticut, by now I have actually spent more of my life in Austin, Texas than in Enfield. I find it difficult to contemplate that development and not chuckle. The roots and routes that led me to Austin were not entirely of my own choosing, but in the end I am glad that the winds of fate blew me in the direction that they did. I do think that being from the original Enfield helps to give me a unique perspective in judging Austin’s historical development. It is a perspective that I continue to bring to my work serving the Austin community, particularly in East Austin.

“I still catch myself doing a double take at Austin’s “Old Enfield” houses, so like my hometown old Enfield in Connecticut.”
When you join, your membership in the Austin History Center Association helps promote community awareness and use of the Austin History Center.

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AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER ASSOCIATION

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We actively seek new individual and business members. You can help by sharing this newsletter with a friend interested in Austin’s past and present. For more information, email director@ahca.net. Or visit us in the O. Henry Room of the Austin History Center at Guadalupe & 9th.

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EXAMPLES OF McGEE’S DOUBLE TAKES AT AUSTIN’S “OLD ENFIELD” HOUSES, SO LIKE HIS OLD ENFIELD HOMETOWN, IN CONNECTICUT.

In almost five years as AHCA Executive Director, I have witnessed probably at least five thousand acts of philanthropy directed in support of both the Association and the Austin History Center. Philanthropy, of course, can be gifts of volunteerism, expertise, and funds.

Simply stated, your philanthropy inspires and enables service to the community. A donation of archival materials to Austin History Center results in service to researchers and community learners. A membership contribution to Austin History Center Association results in the learning and experiencing of Austin history, manifested throughout these fine newsletters, programs, planning for the expansion to the Faulk Library, and a newly budding oral history initiative. A purchase of a book from Waterloo Press results in the new publications. Your purchase of an Eberly Luncheon sponsorship or ticket results in the renewed opportunity to join each year at the exquisite, historic Driskill and celebrate 174 years of community history.

Recall when the Austin Public Library vacated the current Austin History Center building in 1980 for the John Henry Faulk Building next door, it was the Association (at that time called the Austin History Center Guild) that advocated for the building to stay in city hands and transformed the Austin-Travis County Collection into the Austin History Center. Major dollars were raised, and as history repeats itself, the Association will again undertake major capital fundraising in the not-too-distant future — to support the AHC in its planned expansion to the Faulk Library site next door.

It is no irony that the Waterloo Press will soon be publishing a pictorial of historical snapshots of many of Austin’s leading philanthropists from 1976 to the present. What a glorious era that fueled Austin’s growth from being a state capital and “college town” to a thriving metropolis. Easy to perhaps be cynical and miss a smaller Austin, but impossible to deny the profound and glowing generosity that built this city up over the past 40 years.

In future newsletters, we will focus on the exemplary acts of philanthropy to the AHCA from individuals, businesses, and foundations. To every member, donor, volunteer, sponsor, and Waterloo Press consumer, we say thank you for supporting us so we can expand and improve service and always learn from the history of Austin, Texas.

Please consider a gift to the Austin History Center Association. You can visit www.austinhistory.net to get started.

If you wish to make a financial contribution of any type to Austin History Center Association, or, volunteer for any AHCA initiative, please visit the left-side menu of our website at www.austinhistory.net or call 512-974-7499.
**2013 Save the Date**

**Now through March 10**

**Tuesday, March 19**
Austin History Center new photo exhibit opens in the Holt Photo Gallery on the 80th birthday of the AHC building.

**Now through March 24**
Austin History Center’s Grand Hallway exhibits “Building a Community: The First Century of African American Life in Travis County.”

**Tuesday, May 7**
A delicious AHC exhibit opens featuring food - the preferences, taboos and delicacies prevalent in the days of nineteenth century Austin.

**Austin History Center (AHC) Hours:**
Tuesday – Saturday 10AM – 6PM & Sunday Noon – 6PM