

A Short History of Shepherd Park Plaza

by Dorothy Lofton

Long before the white man came, Orcoquisac Indians hunted deer, bear and buffalo in this area. They were a small tribe, which roamed the lower San Jacinto and Trinity River valleys, fishing and hunting in family groups along the upper reaches of Galveston Bay.

Evidence of several of their camps has been uncovered along Spring and Cypress creeks. In winter they settled into semi-permanent villages in the northern part of Harris County where they hunted and sometimes cultivated maize.

Farming has long been a part of life in this area. (Even today we have a Community Garden, managed by SPP's own Beth Galiano, at the entrance to our subdivision on Alba.) Glenn Holliday, first president of our Civic Club, recalled growing up in the early 1920s on a truck farm on what is now Donovan Street.

The area where we live (here in Shepherd Park Plaza) was once the location of vegetable and dairy farms; the Farmers Market on Airline was created to provide a place for these small truck farmers to sell their produce. The subdivision as we know it today began with the sale of 222 lots on 10 blocks in what is now called Section One.

This sale was made to Suburban Homes Lumber / Oak Glen building Company on May 29, 1958 by Sweeney Estates, owned by John S.

Mellinger, an attorney with offices in the old Union National Bank Building. In October 1958 the neighborhood newspaper, *The Leader*, reported that Ella Boulevard had been re-topped from W.43rd to Pinemont. And, In September 1959 *The Leader* reported that “extensive... residential development was taking place right at our doorstep.” Five model homes were built on Chamboard in Section One, just east of Alba.

Shepherd Park Plaza today encompasses four sections and 729 homes and is considered one of the best neighborhoods in the city - and one of the safest. In 1993 Shepherd Park Plaza’s “Citizens on Patrol” under the leadership of Don Blaise was cited by the Houston Police Department for significantly reducing neighborhood crime.

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