



## HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

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August 4, 2014

National Trust for Historic Preservation  
C/O Ms. Beth Wiedower  
Via Email: [bwiedower@savingplaces.org](mailto:bwiedower@savingplaces.org)

Re: Hogg Bird Sanctuary, Camp Logan and Buffalo Bayou Proposed for National Historic Landmark Designation

To Whom It May Concern:

The Hogg Bird Sanctuary, dedicated by Miss Ima Hogg in the 1950s to preserve Buffalo Bayou natural heritage, followed the Hogg preservation in the 1920s of Camp Logan Headquarters, now known as Memorial Park. The creation of the 1503-acre Memorial Park recognizes the significance of a 1917 all-Black Battalion, serving during World War I at Camp Logan. The Camp and Bird Sanctuary throughout Memorial Park represent a significant archeological and historic surviving site from a special World War I era training camp for Black and White soldiers, as well as past history.

Along the north side of Buffalo Bayou, beginning at the Hogg Bird Sanctuary, is the Camp Logan Hospital facility that comprised the southeast corner of the Camp proper. The Camp Logan Hospital area involved from sixty to one hundred acres with over forty buildings, allowing provision for 1500 beds, barracks for nurses and officers, and several hospitals, including a Red Cross Hospital building. The main building was constructed in the shape of a Red Cross. The area served Houston as an official Public Health facility (1919-1921) and the Veterans Administration (1921-1923). The eastern part of Memorial Park and the Hogg Bird Sanctuary hold the archeological site of the hospital unit as well as having a significant and intensely poignant existing landfill site. The hospital landfill site holds the history of Camp Logan patients regarding brain, orthopedic and general surgery, as well as various ailment treatments. All hospital items of any kind, including syringes, needles, scalpels, blades, scissors, mallets, turbines, knives, drills, saws and lost body parts, were disposed of in the hospital landfill and remain under the landfill today. As a military base hospital, the Camp Logan institution became ranked "among the first in the United States" by Commander Lt. Colonel J. S. Willis, October 1918.

Pleasantly significant is the fact that the entrance to Camp Logan came via the San Felipe Road designated by the City of Houston as the new Army Highway in 1917. The San Felipe Road brought the Camp Logan entry from the south side of Buffalo Bayou to cross on the historic old "Buffalo Road" into Memorial Park. The old "Buffalo Road" ran across the Golf Course, along the western edge of River Oaks Country Club. The bridge crossing was completed before arrival of the troops where the ancient buffaloes had formerly utilized the sandstone crossing to access the tall grass prairie to the south of Buffalo Bayou.



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Camp Logan, over 5000 acres utilized in west Houston, was initially a United States Army Training Center from 1917 through the end of World War I in August 1919. The Camp name featured the Illinois native General John Alexander Logan, a Congressman, Senator and unsuccessful candidate for Vice President of the U.S.A. Over 1000 Illinois National Guards became the first group for training, later being sent to France to fight. Six hundred and seventy six men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of Buffalo Soldiers, were sent to guard construction of Camp Logan in July 1917. In October 1918 over 700 Black labor battalion members from the 43<sup>rd</sup> Infantry arrived at Camp Logan. Houston camp officers described Camp Logan as “one of the best equipped National Guard camps in the United States” which focused on military training of troops.

The alignment of Buffalo Bayou, fronting along the Hogg Bird Sanctuary and upstream along Memorial Park, exhibits a historic land formation documented in 1840 Harris County Surveyor George H. Bringhurst. He traveled several days along the north side of Buffalo Bayou (now Memorial Park) beginning at Shepherd Drive to beyond Dutchman’s Crossing (near Woodway Bridge). Bringhurst’s survey mapping along the bayou ridge matches the current alignment of Buffalo Bayou meanders, giving rise that the present bayou bank pattern is well over 175 years old. The alluvial nature of the old Archery Range dates the Range alignment to 12,000 years. A canoe trip down Buffalo Bayou or visit to Memorial Park reveals a step back in time that is outstanding for stream preservation, education and reverence to historic vistas.

Camp Logan was designated as a State Antiquities Landmark by the Texas Historical Commission in 2013. Camp Logan and the Hogg Bird Sanctuary provide a unique combination of ancient history, early 20<sup>th</sup> century military history, natural history and bird life, bordered by the historic section of Buffalo Bayou. This uniqueness provides a strong association to local, state and national history for all residents and visitors to peruse. The history provides a potential for advanced education related to Native Americans, historic plants and animals, as well as Spanish and Euro-American progression into the southern United States. The Harris County Historical Commission supports designation of the Hogg Bird Sanctuary, Memorial Park’s Camp Logan and the historic Buffalo Bayou alignment to a National Historic Landmark Designation.

Respectfully submitted:

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Janet K. Wagner, Chair

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Chris Varela, Vice Chair