

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 25, 2019
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2019-0035
2806 SAN PEDRO STREET

PROPOSAL

Relocate a ca. 1925 house outside the city limits.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, rectangular-plan, side-gabled building; wood siding; 1:1 vinyl-sash windows; simplified Craftsman influences.

RESEARCH

S. Raymond and Gladys Brooks were the first and longest-term residents, though they only lived in the house a decade at most (ca. 1927-ca. 1935). S. Raymond Brooks was a reporter for the *American Statesman*, managing editor for the *Austin American*, and Capitol correspondent for American Publishing Company who later earned the title “dean of the Capitol Press Corps... a complete newspaper in the form of a man” After the Brooks family moved out, a series of short-term residents occupied the house. Until the early 1940s, it appears that widowed women headed the household and rented rooms to single professionals and UT students; after that, residents are more varied, though students still predominate.

STAFF COMMENTS

The building does not appear to meet the criteria for designation as a historic landmark.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building retains a relatively high degree of integrity. Windows have been replaced.
- 3) Properties must meet two significance criteria for landmark designation (City of Austin Land Development Code, Section 25-2-352). The property does not appear to meet two criteria.
 - a. **Architecture.** The house does not appear to possess architectural distinction.
 - b. **Historical association.** S. Raymond and Gladys W. Brooks were the first residents, living in the house for approximately nine years. Raymond Brooks became a well-known reporter with numerous accolades by the late 1950s. However, he lived in the house in his earliest years of reporting, and there do not appear to be significant historical associations.
 - c. **Archaeology.** The property was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
 - d. **Community value.** The property does not appear to have a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, a neighborhood, or a particular group.
 - e. **Landscape feature.** The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve the relocation application, subject to completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package, consisting of photographs of all elevations, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history, for archiving at the Austin History Center.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2019-0035
LOCATION: 2806 SAN PEDRO STREET



1" = 333'

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos



Primary (east) façade of 2806 San Pedro Street.

Occupancy History

Completed by Historic Preservation Office staff
February 2019

1924 Address not listed

1927-35 S. Raymond and Gladys W. Brooks, owners
Raymond worked as a reporter for the *Austin Statesman* (1927, 1930-31, 1935),
managing editor for the *Austin American* (1929), and Capitol correspondent for
American Publishing Company (1932-33).

1939 Mrs. Adelaide Allen
Mamie Allen, widow of George P. Allen
Leonard A. Day
Photographer
Rovert B. Day
Student, University of Texas

1941 Mrs. Jessie T. McCracken
Orville O. and Juanita F. McCracken

Student, University of Texas

Robert J. and Ila G. Meers
Robert was a student at the University of Texas, while Ila worked as a stenographer for Coffman Daily & Aldridge.

Martha L. Williams
Stenographer, Coffman Daily & Aldridge

1944 Joseph R. and Gladys Davis

1949 Blocker O. and Elizabeth Martin
Salesman

R. Kenn and Martha S. Trenary
Assistant manager, Stephen F. Austin Hotel

1952 Mary P. Nelson
Student, University of Texas

Billye McLendon, renter
Teacher, Rosedale School

Odessa Parsons, renter
Teacher

1955 Vacant

1959 John S. Lauer
Student

Spencer C. Relyea
Student

Ben Woodhead
Student

1962 Hugh Woods
Student

1965 Anthony P. Eastmond
Student

1968 Vacant

1973 Clare Judd
Student

1977 Mary L. Baldwin
No occupation listed

1986-92 Elizabeth (Liz) Kline
No occupation listed

Background Research

Sam Raymond Brooks was born in 1894 in Rodessa, Louisiana. He attended Rice University for two years and served as an assistant editor of *The Thresher* yearbook in 1916. Before attending Rice, he had worked as a reporter at the *Beaumont Enterprise*, owned by William P. Hobby. Records from 1917 show him working as the assistant secretary at Beaumont's Chamber of Commerce, but he soon moved to Austin to work as administrative assistant to then-Governor Hobby (term 1917-21). He lived in the Governor's Mansion for most of that time, but by 1920 was living in an Austin boarding house with other boarders who also worked for various government agencies.

Raymond Brooks became a Capitol reporter in 1921 or 1922 and called himself a "blacksmith of words." During the period he lived at 2806 San Pedro Street (at least 1927 until at least 1935), he worked as a reporter for the *Austin Statesman*, managing editor for the *Austin American*, and Capitol correspondent for American Publishing Company, which published the *Austin American* and *Austin Statesman*. By 1937, he and his family owned and lived at 1010 W. 16th Street, and he was working as a newspaper correspondent for a media syndicate (unnamed in the Census), beginning an energetic career of "lop[ing] happily through life, satisfied with his life work of reporting the news," according to his obituary. "He never walked when he could run, and never rested when he could work."

Brooks became a Texas legend as an energetic newspaperman with an ear for words and a nose for politics. A colorful 1962 profile ribbed that "Raymond has been tabbing Texas politicians so long they'll scarcely caucus unless he's already in the room." He covered state politics, legislation, and courts for Newspapers, Inc.: the *News-Tribune* and *Times-Herald* in Waco, the *Austin American* and *Austin Statesman*, the *Port Arthur News*, and the *Lufkin News*. Brooks won the State Bar of Texas Journalism Award for distinguished reporting (1956 and 1960) and the Texas Heritage Medal (1957), was honored by a Texas Senate Resolution (1959), and earned promotion to brigadier general of the Texas State Guard Reserve Corps. He authored two books on Texas tax structure.

Raymond Brooks was also active in civic organizations and public agencies, such as the Lower Colorado River Authority (as director in the 1940s), the Austin Chamber of Commerce, the Austin Area Economic Development Foundation, and Travis County Association for the Blind. He died in 1968 in Houston and was buried in the Texas State Cemetery in recognition of his public service. See following pages for newspaper articles.

Gladys Iona Brooks (nee Whitefield or Whitfield) was born in 1900 in Texas. She grew up in Grimes, where her father worked as a laborer in a saw mill. In 1922, she married Raymond Brooks in Hays County, and the couple had two children. She died in Austin in 1982. See following pages for obituary.

Raymond Brooks: Newspaperman

By MARJ WIGHTMAN

In the old days when copy desk men hid an almost dyspeptic hate of the purple phrase under green eyeshades, the old, old days before 10 fingers tapped almost as fast as two on newsroom typewriters and the editorial horsewhip went the way of the spittoon, there was just one way for a youngster to learn his craft:

He picked out a Raymond Brooks to follow, and then stuck close.

In this new day of copy desk men with golf course tans, women (good Lord!) pecking away at the courthouse and the executive suite system deciding policy up front, he'd still do well to follow the old method.

For Raymond Brooks, dean of the Capitol Press Corps and 68 years old today, is what one editor has called a complete newspaper in the form of a man.

AMAZING SPEED

"It's simply amazing how fast Raymond can turn out a story. Why, I've seen the day he was assigned to do the lead piece on a story we were covering from several angles. By the time the other men got around to hunting for Raymond, he'd already turned in his copy and gone on to something else."

Then, without even bothering to change hats (he never wears 'em; only pipes) Raymond will turn to next morning's Austin American editorial page.

Chief editorial writer of The Austin American, co-author of the Capitol "A" column, and one of three correspondents who keep tabs on Texas politics for The American - Statesman, the Waco News-Tribune and the Port Arthur News, Raymond Brooks is the kind of man who should be writing journalism textbooks.

But, he won't; he's too busy being a newspaperman.

Yet, this youngster with the brand new bachelor of arts and dreams of sitting around the fire with governors and president makers could do worse than follow him around for a year or two.

He'd have to move with the speed of a handball player, though. The Brooks walk is a one-man system for putting the hurry up feeling into feet—and then reminding them of their mission in life all through the day.

WHERE THE NEWS IS

Pipe clamped tight in his face, shoulders hunched into the go, go, go pace of thoughts and feet, Raymond has been tabbing Texas politicians with words so long they'll scarcely caucus unless he's already in the room. If there's something about to happen, Raymond will already be knocking his pipe against the ash tray.

A few years ago he skipped a Truman by-invitation-only press conference to wait out the meeting between Governor Allan Shivers and Democratic National Chairman Paul Butler. This was the little get-together in Sam Rayburn's kitchen where Shivers declined to support Adlai Stevenson for the presidency.

The president makers and breakers had scarcely stubbed out their last cigars before Raymond had "the Kitchen Sink Conference" in headlines.

He's called himself a blacksmith of words, which is a neat phrase but one that still doesn't do right by the Raymond Brooks technique for getting the most out of our mother tongue.

It was Raymond who put the tag of "Immortal 56" on the Texas House members who held out and blocked W. Lee O'Daniel's sales tax plan. The phrase stuck and was mentioned again last year in the final battle against the tax.

His headline use of "Adam's Apple" to describe the lookout tower built on old East Avenue by the city when Adam Johnson was manager is still a part of the Austin vocabulary.

And when a do-nothing session of the Texas Legislature quit after passing a bill to change the spelling of Zavala County, Raymond summed up its accomplishments in this lead:

"They knocked 'L' out of Zavalla and went home."

Ralph Yarborough's election to the US Senate right after his defeat for governor drew the typical Brooks treatment. Raymond summed it up as "the biggest consolation prize in Texas."

This is not the kind of phrase making you learn in classrooms or grab, full-sailed and tacking before the wind, out of wistful dreams. You get it partly from the blood of grandfathers, mostly out of work and years.

LEARNS POLITICAL LESSONS

A cub (back in the days when the term was still used) reporter on William P. Hobby's Beaumont Enterprise in 1914, Raymond came to Austin three years later as administrative assistant to Governor Hobby. He learned his politics well.

In 1922 the young reporter joined the corps of capitol correspondents on Capitol Hill, and never went back south except for rest or news. But, there's one trip down to the Valley he'll never forget. Here's how Raymond compares today's bevying burst of newsmen juggling for position around a president with Warren G. Harding's visit to Brownsville.

"Harding, Mrs. Harding, and a party of about 10 cronies came to Texas in a special Pullman car attached to a regular train. They lived in the car during a five-day visit as guests of GOP boss Rene B. Creager.

"There was one Secret Service man along. If there were any newspapermen on hand, they were inconspicuous.

"The only member of Harding's party I can recall now was Albert B. Fall, who was to be appointed Secretary of the Interior and later go to prison in the Teapot Dome scandals.

"Harding was taken out on a fishing trip from Port Isabel. When the boat returned to harbor, rains had made the road impassable back to Brownsville and the Harding party was marooned on the boat for a day and a night.

"Gov. Hobby went to Brownsville to greet the Republican President-elect and I went along. It was during Prohibition so I, like everyone else, went across to Matamoras and brought back a bottle of

liquor. I had it wrapped in a newspaper.

"Gov. Hobby's special Pullman had been backed up on Track No. 1 and there were other cars on the tracks. When I got back from Mexico, I stepped up into the car where the governor's Pullman had been parked. As I did, I heard someone call out but I didn't stop.

"When I walked inside, I found Mrs. Harding there, with a group of guests. I realized the Harding car had been moved. I went out the door.

"The Secret Service man who had called to me was waiting. I still had the paper-wrapped package under my arm. He didn't say anything about the package, and I didn't either. But, I had to get out in front of the station where the lights were bright and go up to the street.

"There was a band marching alongside the car playing music, so I marched along, too. That seemed like a long, long car. I finally found the governor's car . . . but,

I still wonder how I got by that Secret Service man."

That's not hard to figure. There's an old saying that's been around for years . . . "God takes care of fools, United States sailors, and newspapermen."

Besides, look what was ahead: the State Bar of Texas Journalism Award for distinguished reporting in 1956, the Texas Heritage Medal in 1957, the Texas Senate Resolution passed on Brooks' 65th birthday in 1959, the second State Bar award in 1960.

And then there are those youngsters new to the city room, the kind who look up as Raymond breezes past to say, "who's that?"

"Raymond Brooks," you answer.

"Oh," the summertime refugee from the college classroom says. "He moves pretty fast for an oldtimer, doesn't he?"

You turn away so he won't see the smile. His typewriter is moving faster than ever.



RAYMOND BROOKS, DEAN OF TEXAS' CAPITOL PRESS CORPS

After 40 years the deadline is old, the story ever new.

"Raymond Brooks: Newspaperman" (2 of 2), Austin American-Statesman, 7/8/1962.

Veteran Newsman

Raymond Brooks Dies

Raymond Brooks called himself a "blacksmith of words," and now the anvil is silent and the forge is at rest.

Brooks, the "Dean of the Capitol Correspondents" in Austin, died Thursday afternoon in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Houston.

Funeral is pending at Cook Funeral Home.

He had undergone two operations for cancer of the throat in recent years, and his cheerfulness and heroism from his first illness to his last added to the legend that is Raymond Brooks.

Until the final few days of his life, Brooks' typewriter was

busy hammering out the news stories and commentaries which made his name a household word for Texans who keep up with statehouse affairs.

After his first operation in 1965, which took away his power of speech, Brooks sent word that he would like to have a typewriter, that he would like to continue writing for these newspapers, that it "would help to pass the time." Thus stories with Brooks' byline were written for more than two months in the VA Hospital in Houston on a typewriter sent to him at his request.

He came back to Austin, and for more than two years he again took his desk at the press room at the State Capitol. With his voice gone, he told Texans of their government with his pen. He conducted his interviews with state officials by asking them questions in notes.

He re-entered the VA Hospital for the last time in late March.

Brooks was the dean of the regular Capitol correspondents, covering Texas political, legislative and state courts for half a century.

For 40 of these years he was Capitol correspondent for the group of papers comprising Newspapers, Inc. — the News-Tribune and Times-Herald in Waco, the American and the Statesman in Austin, the Port Arthur News, and in recent years the Lufkin News.

Honored both inside and outside the profession, Brooks' awards included:

1956 — State Bar of Texas Journalism Award for "distinguished contribution to the science of jurisprudence and the advancement of the administration of justice."

1957 — Texas Heritage Medal.

1959 — Texas Senate resolution recognized his 65th birthday.

1959 — Promotion to brigadier general, Texas State Guard Reserve Corps. He had served as colonel and assistant chief of staff of Texas State Guard Reserve Corps.

1960 — His second State Bar of Texas Journalism Award.

Brooks started his newspaper work for Governor W. P.

Hobby's Beaumont Enterprise in 1914. He served as administrative assistant to Gov. Hobby during his administration, 1917-21. Brooks lived in the Governor's Mansion, where he would be handy to write press releases and speeches for the governor. It was in 1921 that Brooks joined the corps of correspondents at the Capitol.

There was a break in his service as a member of the governor's staff. During World War I he saw service in the U.S. Army in the intelligence branch.

It was through this Army experience that Brooks became interested in guns. For many years he was an expert marksman. He was an enthusiastic hunter and looked forward each year to the opening of deer season.

Unlike most hunters he had a taste for wild game and often referred to himself as a "meat hunter" rather than a sportsman.

At the same time his by-line was becoming trusted and looked for, Brooks was also contributing as a citizen in the field of public service. He was the only lay member of the original committee of the then Texas Bar Association which worked with the late Chief Justice C. M. Cureton to start the movement for a memorial to the Supreme Court of Texas — a movement which resulted in the new Courts Building.

Brooks was active in numerous civic and public organizations, among them the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Austin Chamber of Commerce, Austin Area Economic Development Foundation, Better Business Bureau and Travis County Association for the Blind.

Brooks attended Rice Institute and The University of Texas.

Brooks' editorials and political commentary have been frequently reprinted in the national press. Two collections of his articles on the Texas tax structure have been published in book form. They are "Texas Tax Outlook" and "Some Views on Taxation." A popular series of his writings which appeared in nine Texas newspapers 1954-55 under the title of "Political Playback" related anecdotes and incidents in politics for a period of 30 years.

In association with Sam Wood, Brooks wrote the daily column appearing in The Austin American as "Capitol A."

He served as president of the Austin Professional Chapter of the journalistic fraternity, Sigma Delta Chi.

A small man, quick of movement and even quicker of mind, Raymond Brooks never was caught wasting a moment of his 73 years. A bit like a hummingbird, he would settle down for a moment of instant conversation — telling a topical story, usually with a delicious pun in it, softly chuckle and then move on.

He was always busy, but somehow Brooks always took time to answer a young reporter's question, explain a complicated governmental procedure to a colleague or pass out one of his rare and genuine compliments for a job someone else had done well.

This compliment was usually no more than two words, "Good work," or "Good story," but from Brooks it was enough to make a colleague feel that all was well in the world.

Brooks never wasted time in such mundane chores as putting paper in a typewriter (this was done with a flash of the wrist)

nor drinking a cup of coffee (this was done in one gulp).

With his ever-present pipe clenched between his teeth, Brooks loped happily through life, satisfied with his life work of reporting the news.

He never walked when he could run, and never rested when he could work.

On his 65th birthday in 1959, when the Texas Senate he had covered so long gave him special recognition, a colleague wrote that it took three men to fill Brooks' shoes on the days he was absent from work for one reason or the other, and that it made folk think "maybe Brooks is that rare person: the indispensable man."

Now that fate has made it necessary to do without Brooks, his associates still look toward his empty desk — in vain for the quick smile, the helpful file, the sure fact he always had ready.

When he received the State Bar of Texas award, Homa Hill, who was chairman of the State Bar's public information committee, said: "This is but a small token of our appreciation for all Mr. Brooks has said and done in his stories and columns for these more than 40 years toward the maintenance of a free America, of our democratic representative government and for the support of a free judiciary."

Brooks' great pride was his family, who survive his wife, two married daughters and a son. The daughters are Mrs. Betty Jane Matocha and Mrs. Grover Howell Jr. The son is Raymond Jr.

Brooks is survived by his wife, Mrs. Raymond Brooks, two daughters, Mrs. Grover M. Howell Jr., Austin, and Mrs. Boles Matocha, El Paso; a son, Sam R. Brooks, Memphis, Tenn.; seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

State Plot

Brooks' Funeral Private

Private funeral services will be held at 4 p.m. Saturday at Cook Funeral Home for Raymond Brooks, 75, widely known as the "dean of Capitol correspondents."

Brooks died Thursday. Burial will be in the Texas State Cemetery.

Gov. John Connally signed a proclamation Friday allowing burial in the state cemetery because of Brooks' public service.

Brooks served as a director of the Lower Colorado River Authority in the 1940s. Also, he was a brigadier general in the Texas State Guard Reserve Corps.

Brooks died of cancer at the Veterans Administration Hospital at Houston.

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward Matocha will officiate at funeral services for the family, close friends and associates.

Survivors include his widow, Mrs. S. Raymond Brooks, Austin; two daughters, Mrs. Grover M. Howell Jr., Austin, and Mrs. Boles Matocha, El Paso; a son, Sam R. Brooks, Jr., Memphis, Tenn.; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Pallbearers will be Sam Wood, Stuart Long, W. H. (Bill) Gardner, Richard (Dick) Morehead, Sam Kinch and Bo Byers.

"Brooks' funeral private," The Austin American-Statesman, 9/21/1968.

Gladys W. Brooks

Gladys W. Brooks, 82, of Austin, died Tuesday.

The widow of S. Raymond Brooks, Mrs. Brooks is survived by her son, Sam R. Brooks of Memphis, Tennessee; daughter, Mrs. Grover M. Howell, Jr. of Corpus Christi; seven grandchildren; six great grandchildren.

No services are planned. Arrangements through Cook-Walden Funeral Home.

Gladys W. Brooks obituary, The Austin American-Statesman, 9/8/1982.

Building Permits

	R. H. Montgomery		2806 San Pedro St.
60	36	-	6 -
	Bluffside Addition		
	Rear terrace porch addition to res.		
	142r - 2/23/39		

Building permit issued to R. H. Montgomery for a rear porch addition, 2/28/1939.