

1505 Postoffice

Lot 6, Block 435

William B. T. and Mary J. Batterson House, c.1868, rebuilt 1890

A historic insurance record for this two-story house, dated 20 November 1890 notes the age of the building at 1505 Postoffice Street as “old, rebuilt 1890.” The 1890 record notes a two-story house with a slate roof that sat above a one-story ground-level basement. The house contained eight rooms, two halls, a kitchen, one bathroom, one closet and three brick flues, two of which were later connected to stoves. Two sets of double gallery porches are also noted on the record. Oil was originally used for lighting but a notation indicates the house was wired for electric lights in 1904. In 1890, the building was kept in “good repair” and used as a single-family dwelling although notations point to 20th century alterations made by later owners accommodated multiple families. Mary J. Batterson, the widow of William B. T. Batterson, is noted as the building’s original owner.

William Barret Travis Batterson was born in Harris County, Texas, on 13 March 1836. His father, Isaac, moved to Texas from New York in the early 1830s and purchased land in east Harris County where he established the community of Clinton, known today as Galena Park. Isaac died in 1838 and his widow, Amelia, remarried. By 1850, Amelia and William were in Galveston, where the U. S. Census recorded them within the household Amelia’s second husband, merchant Josiah T. Harrell.

In 1858, William Batterson married Mary Jane Page in Galveston (4 May). Mary Jane was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, on 16 February 1837 and moved to Galveston in 1843 with her parents, John and Louisa Page. After William and Mary Jane married, their first residence was on the corner of 17th and Avenue L, as it was recorded in the 1859 Galveston City Directory. The directory recorded William’s occupation as a printer. After the Civil War ended, William worked as a cotton sampler before he established his own cotton brokerage firm with partner Oscar Painpare. Their company, Painpare & Batterson, was located on the third floor of the Osterman Building at 22nd and Strand. The business dissolved after William’s death on 22 January 1874.

In 1866, Mary Jane and William purchased lot 6 of block 435 from Garret and Margaret Van Benthuysen. The deed of sale was recorded in the Galveston County Clerk’s office on 14 April 1866. (*Document #1866000403, Book U, Page 321*). The first Galveston City Directory to record the Battersons living on the 1500 block of Postoffice Street was 1868-69.

A view of the Batterson’s lot as seen on the 1871 Bird’s Eye View Map of Galveston notes a three-bay, two-story house with a front gable roof. This rendering may reflect the earliest portion of the Batterson house noted as “old” on the building’s 1890 insurance record. The hipped roof seen today may be a result of the 1890 “rebuild” noted on the property record. The footprint of the

building seen on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps resembles the form of an I-house, a term derived from the shape of a floor-plan that typically contained a center-hall with one-room on either side and only one-room deep. This configuration as well as the presence of double galleries at both the front and rear of the building, also depicted on the Sanborn footprints of the building, are common features of the I-house form.

After William Batterson's death in 1874, Mary Jane maintained the Batterson family residence on Postoffice Street with her children, Isaac N. (1861-1934), William E. (1862-1932), Charles T. (1866-1940), and Mary (Marie) Adele (1870-1958). Census records during Mary Jane's tenure as head of household noted "roomers" who resided with the family. Archived newspaper advertisements two "southern" facing furnished rooms were available for rent within the Batterson House during the same time period. After Mary Jane's death in 1926, her daughter, Adele inherited the house. She resided there until her own death in 1958.

Ella Mae Marrow purchased 1505 Postoffice from Adele Batterson's estate in 1958. Marrow subdivided the building and used it as a multi-family tenant house. Carolyn Hoffman bought the house from Marrow in 1959 and continued to utilize the house as rent property until 1962 when she sold it to Mary Cecile Chambers. Chambers resided at 1520 Market Street and used 1505 Postoffice as rent property until her death in 1970. By 1976, the house was in need of repairs and remodeling, as noted in Galveston Daily News real estate advertisements. Paul Head bought the house in 1976 from the executors of Chambers estate and immediately transferred the house to Bobby Alexander. In 1977, William C. and Valerie Williams bought the property from Alexander. The current owner purchased the house from the Williams' in 1980. They removed the double gallery at the rear of the building in 1997 to allow for a historically sympathetic addition to the house that accommodates additional living space. Because of their thoughtful and continued stewardship, the Batterson House contributes to the historical integrity of the National Register East End Historic Landmark District.

ATTACHMENTS:

- I. Photograph, Batterson family, date unknown
- II. Galveston Bird's Eye View Map, 1871/ Block 435
- III. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Footprints/ Lot 6, Block 435
- IV. Photograph, 1505 Postoffice Street, c.1976
- V. Photograph, 1505 Postoffice Street, 1991/ North Elevation
- VI. Photograph, 1505 Postoffice Street, 1991/ South Elevation

ATTACHMENT I

William and Mary Jane Batterson, with children. Date unknown.

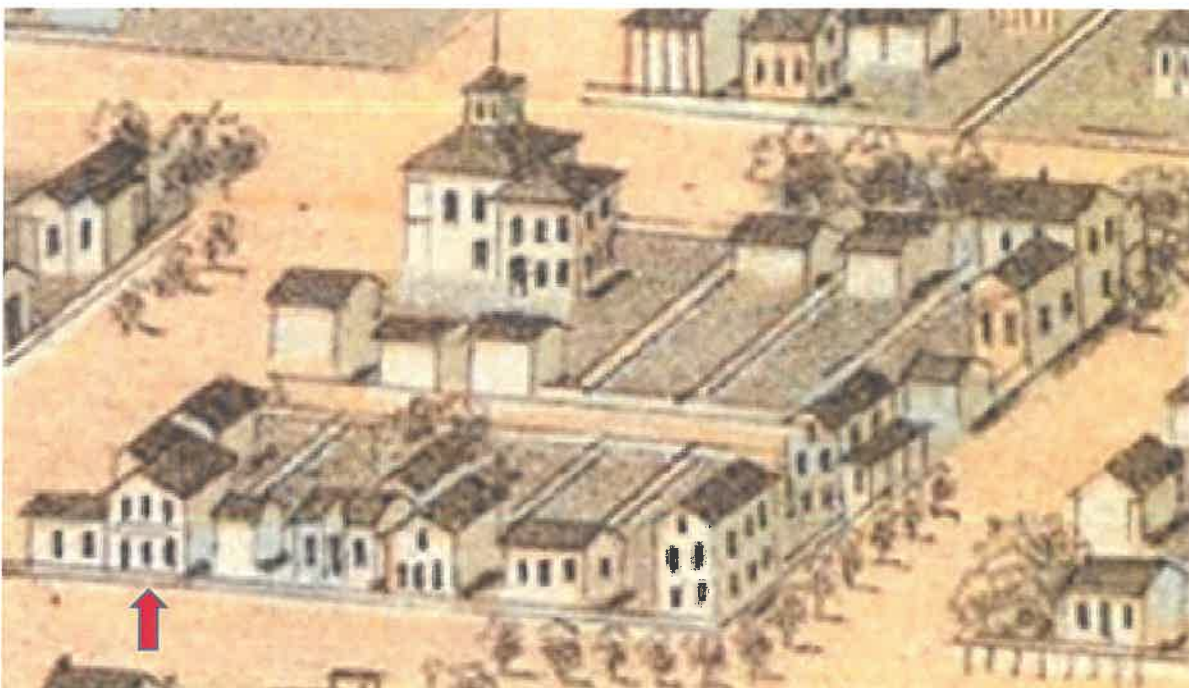
(Source: Ancestry.com/ Family Tree/ William Barret Travis Batterson)



ATTACHMENT II

Galveston Bird's Eye View Map, 1871/ Block 435

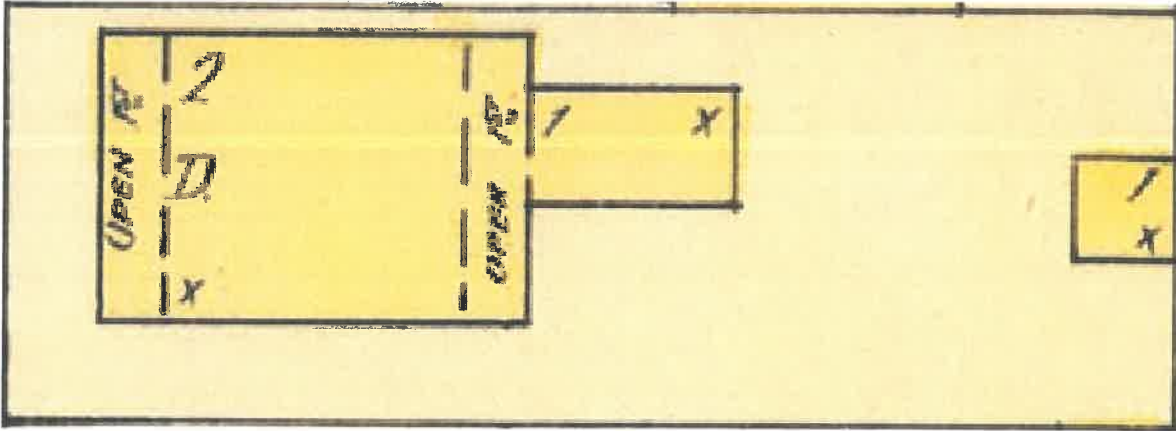
A red arrow notes lot number six and Batterson property.



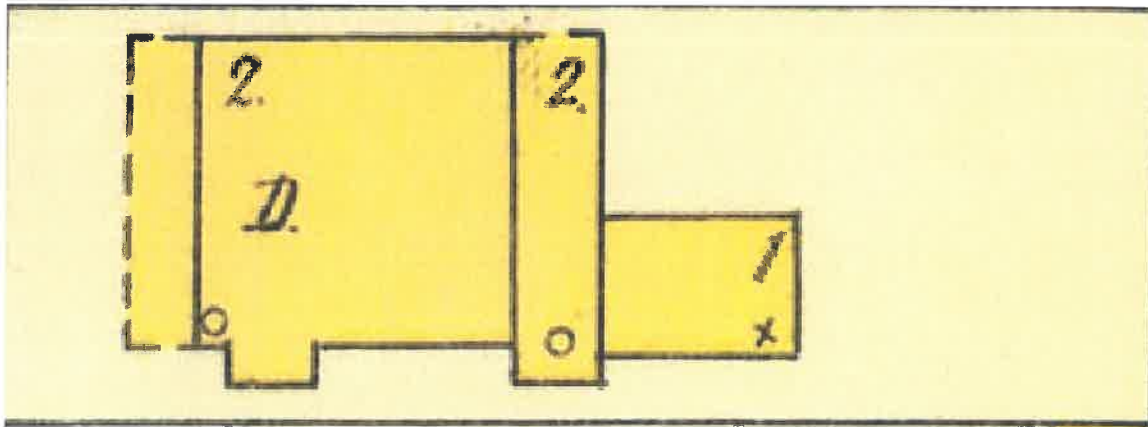
ATTACHMENT III

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Footprints/ Lot 6, Block 435

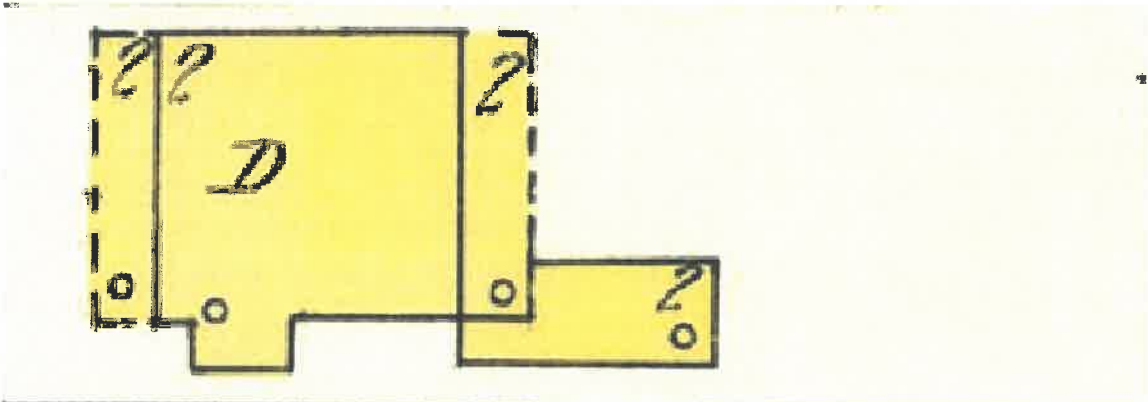
1889, prior to 1890 "rebuild" noted on property insurance record



1899



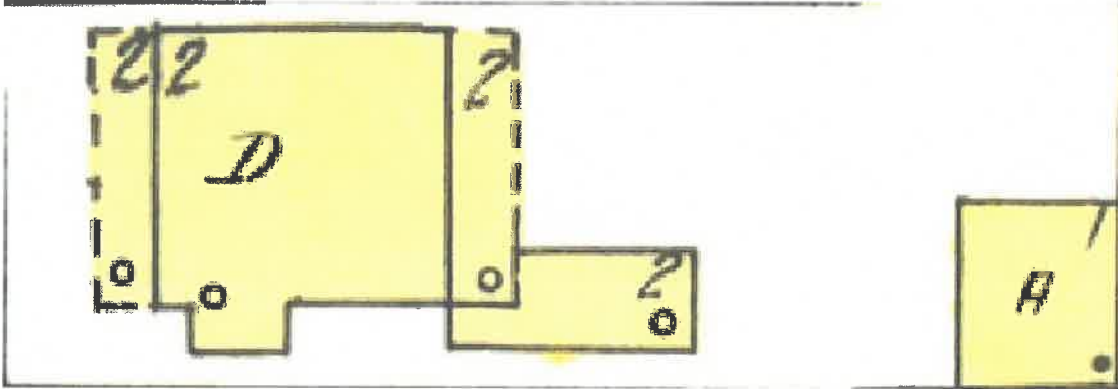
1912



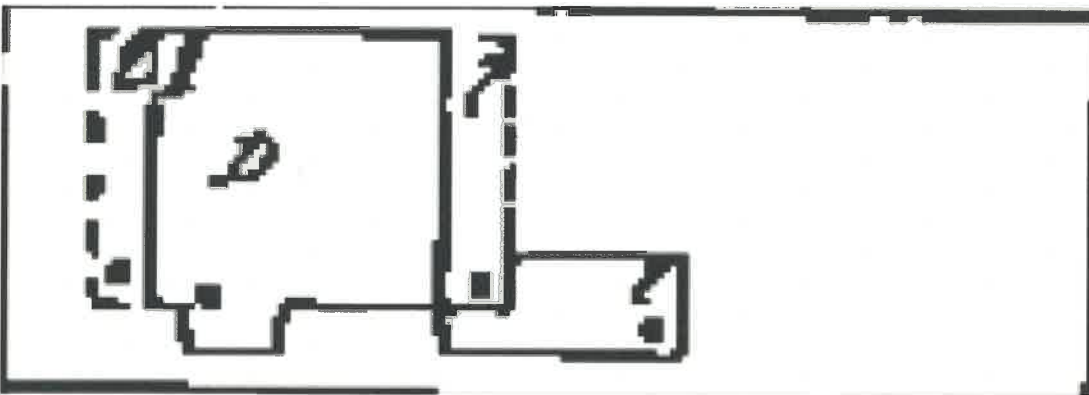
ATTACHMENT III (continued)

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Footprints/ Lot 6, Block 435

1947



1985



ATTACHMENT IV

Batterson House, 1505 Postoffice Street, c.1976.

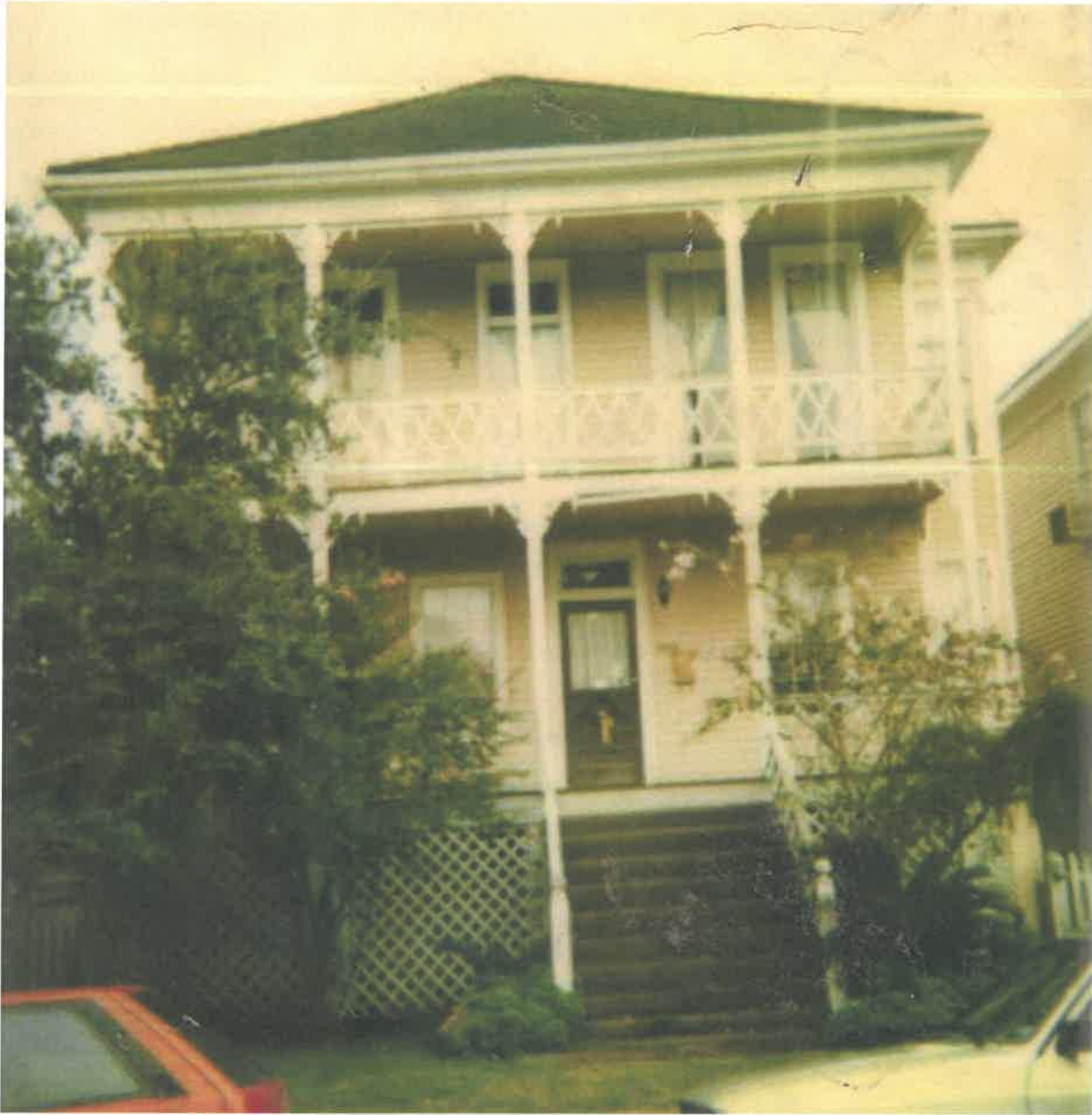
(Source: Galveston Historical Foundation, Preservation Resource Center Archive)



ATTACHMENT V

Batterson House, 1505 Postoffice, North Elevation, 1991.

(Source: Galveston Historical Foundation, Preservation Resource Center Archive)



ATTACHMENT VI

Batterson House, 1505 Postoffice, South Elevation, 1991.

(Source: Galveston Historical Foundation, Preservation Resource Center Archive)

