Project Title Red Book of Houston

Project Summary The Red Book of Houston enables us to visualize the space occupied by the African American community in the early nineteenth century in Houston. Students may conduct research on individuals in the Red Book and write extended biographies that will then be added to an online exhibit in the Woodson Research Center's Digital Collections.

Project Description The Red Book of Houston, published in 1915, provides a detailed view of middle-class Black life in Houston. It includes information pertaining to the fields of education, business, and religion, as well as brief personal histories and lists civic and social organizations. The book provides many physical addresses for churches, schools and teachers, businesses, social clubs, civic organizations, and the home addresses of prominent families. We have worked with both undergraduate and graduate students supported by the Fondren Fellows program, the department of history, and faculty research funds to first map these locations and now offer more context about the people and places in the Red Book. Ultimately, we have created a project that enables us to visualize the space occupied by the African American community in the early nineteenth century in Houston. Currently, we have students conducting research on individuals in the Red Book in order to write extended biographies that will then be added to an online exhibit in Quartex. If supported by the Fondren Fellows program, we would continue to work with students to research and write biographies of individuals who appear in the Red Book and students interested in data clean up and mapping.

We would like the students to present some of their work at an undergraduate research conference, most likely the Humanities and Arts Festival during Inquiry Weeks. This would allow students to work on their oral and visual presentation skills.

Key Tasks

- Working with spreadsheets and updating data within the ArcGIS platform.
- Using newspaper archives, census materials, city directories, government archives, and secondary historical works to research the lives of individuals.
- Creating written and visual materials for posters and oral presentations to share at a research conference.
- Updating the Red Book ArcGIS StoryMap with new hyperlinks to Quartex or investigating individuals in the book and writing their biographies.

Anticipated Project Outcomes Biographies will be added to the digital Red Book project that can then be accessed by the Houston public, scholars, and family researchers. This resource both preserves an important part of Houston's Black history and also builds good will between Rice University and the larger Houston community. Students who work on the project will learn more about the city where they are attending school.

Qualifications

- 1 student should be a Humanities major, preferably from the History Department.

- 1 student should have experience working with ArcGIS and on Digital Humanities projects.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will build on their research and writing skills if they choose to work on individual biographies.
- Students may also develop data clean up skills and ArcGIS skills.
- Students learn about the history of Black Houston.