

THE 32ND ANNUAL

HYDE PARK
HOMES TOUR



JUNE 16 - 17 2007

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Doing our part to
keep hyde park weird

Welcome to the 32nd Annual Hyde Park Homes Tour

This year, the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association is pleased to partner with the Austin State Hospital, which begins the celebration of its 150th anniversary in 2007.

As one of Austin's oldest neighborhoods, Hyde Park is frequently under pressure to develop, grow, and modernize. Many of the homes you see today have been through the process of modernization - but in ways that are compatible with a historic neighborhood. Development and investment can revitalize a community, but the context of that development needs to be considered and the new should be connected to the old. We cannot take a neighborhood for granted.

An example is the beautiful trees you see as you wander through Hyde Park during the tour. They are an integral part of the neighborhood: besides providing much needed

relief from the brutal Texas sun, they also define our streets and community. But their existence is no happy accident. They were part of Monroe Shipe's master plan when he envisioned Austin's first suburb 116 years ago. It took time, planning, and patience, but a look around today makes it clear that the result was well worth the effort. We hope, as you stroll from house to house getting decorating ideas or simply seeing how other people live, that you will take the time to appreciate our shady canopy and appreciate the impact it has on our community

Please enjoy this year's Hyde Park Homes Tour: A Shady Sanctuary. And don't wait until next year's tour to come back and see us again!

Elaine Meenehan

Hyde Park Neighborhood Association President

The Hyde Park Neighborhood Fair

On the grounds of the Austin State Hospital

Music Schedule

Saturday, June 16

- 10:00 - 11:45 am **PK Sax Jazz Trio**
12:00 - 1:30 pm **Angelic Strings** *Classical Violin/Harp*
1:45 - 3:00 pm **Suzanna Choffel** *Folk/Pop*
3:15 - 4:15 pm **Aimee Bobruk** *Folk*
4:30 - 6:00 pm **Health & Happiness Band** *Bluegrass*

Sunday, June 17

- 12:45 - 2:15 pm **Angelic Strings** *Harp/Violin*
2:30 - 3:45 pm **Liz Morphis Duo** *Jazz Vocals*
4:00 - 5:00 pm **Local Bluegrass/Old Time Music**

Entertainment at Various Houses

- ∞ Paul Klemperer *Sax*
- ∞ Tim Brace *Guitar*
- ∞ Classical Rose Trio *Flute, Clarinet, Cello*
- ∞ Music Express *Vocals*
- ∞ Health & Happiness *Bluegrass*

Hyde Park Neighborhood Fair


- ∞ Nancy Vernon *Prints and Cards*
- ∞ Robin Welter *Pottery*
- ∞ Adam Cohen *Posters and Cards*
- ∞ Jonathan Lopez *Metal Art*
- ∞ Darryl Freeman *Paintings*
- ∞ Ethan Ham *Photography*
- ∞ Romy John *Pottery*
- ∞ Martha Adams *Watercolor Paintings*
- ∞ Sherry Greenberg *Silk and Semi-Precious Stone Necklaces*
- ∞ Ali Yaxley *Children's Table*
- ∞ Austin Children's Museum *Children's Activities*
- ∞ John M. Bittick, *Pastel Paintings*

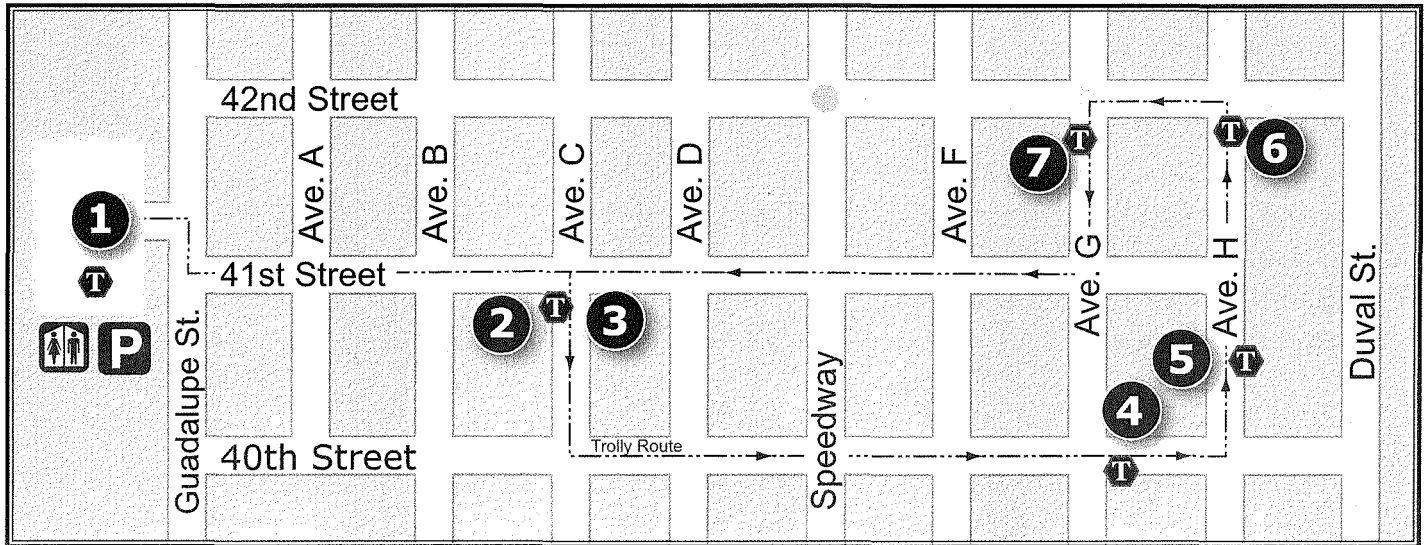
Food Vendors

- ∞ Nile Valley Tea *Hibiscus Tea*
- ∞ Maine Root *Root Beer, Ginger Beer, Sasparilla*
- ∞ Jim Jim's *Natural Snowcones*
- ∞ Boomerang's *Gourmet Veggie & Meat Pies*
- ∞ Tom's Tabooley *Middle Eastern*
- ∞ Chowbaby! *Vegetarian To-Go*

Tour Houses and Shuttle Bus Route

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Austin State Hospital | 4110 Guadalupe Street | Page 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. The Schenken-Oatman House | 311 W 41st Street | Page 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. The Curl-Crockett House | 213 W 41st Street | Page 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. The Crutchfield House | 4001 Avenue G | Page 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. The Dickinson House | 4008 Avenue H | Page 14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. The Rhodes House | 4115 Avenue H | Page 18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. The Wright-Dunlap House | 4108 Avenue G | Page 20 |

 Shuttle bus stop



Hyde Park - A Shady Sanctuary

This year's tour theme, Hyde Park: A Shady Sanctuary, pays appropriate homage both to the historic Austin State Hospital, Texas's first enlightened mental health facility, and the treasured tree life of Hyde Park. For a century, the two have been intertwined, root to branch.

- ☞ Early Austinites drove horse-drawn buggies to picnic in the shade of the stately post oaks on the hospital grounds.
- ☞ Hyde Park founder Monroe Shipe planted pecans, sycamores, catalpas, elms and even transplanted hackberries to create the "perfect shade" he advertised to prospective buyers.
- ☞ Frank Taylor "Fruit Tree" Ramsey yielded to his wife's demands that their children be educated in Austin schools and moved his nursery business from Burnet County to 45th Street, just north of the city limits, and his home just south of 45th on Avenue B. Ramsey's thriving nurseries grew to cover 400 acres and, for a time, Ramsey and ASH were Hyde Park's biggest employers.

- ☞ Young Hyde Park boys scaled its towering native trees; one story recounts how a boy climbed high enough in a pecan tree on Avenue F to see a spectacular fire at the old Huntsman Chemical plant, miles away, at what is now North Lamar and Airport Blvd. Sometimes a climbing boy would stay in a tree for weeks at a time, drawing crowds wondering when and how the boy would eventually come down.
- ☞ Many Hyde Park residents own heirloom photographs that feature families standing proudly beside their newly planted saplings, trees that today tower above the still-standing homes those early families built and occupied.
- ☞ Roy Bedichek, a Hyde Park resident, counseled a watchful eye and tight rein over "...utilities, which sometimes become possessed of a rage for cutting and trimming, apparently imagining a menace in every branch of any tree waving innocently in the wind," in his book, *Adventures with a Texas Naturalist* (1947).
- ☞ Dorothy Richter, the honorary mayor of Hyde Park, is known for her steadfast defense of the ancient landmark

pecan tree at the Hyde Park Fire Station, a defense that precipitated both the enactment of the Austin Tree Preservation Ordinance and the founding of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association.

This urban forest, the very same living organisms that these forebears planted, nurtured, and enjoyed, form the priceless legacy of mature shade trees we have inherited, a treasure never before as valuable and important as it is in today's warming climate. It is literally a fortune to be preserved, protected, and renewed. Today, Hyde Park, together with its neighbors, the Hancock and Eastwoods neighborhoods, leads the way in Austin toward a renewed appreciation and understanding of Shipe's vision of our trees as the essential, living, breathing infrastructure of a livable city.

The 2007 homes tour route passes many landmark heritage trees, some planted by Shipe himself. The mixture of species Shipe planted along Hyde Park's streets and alleys created his "perfect shade," first, as the fast-growing pecans and hackberries spread their branches and later, as the slower-growing, longer-lasting species reached maturity. Each of the locations featured

on this year's tour is distinguished by one of the species that together form Hyde Park's shady sanctuary.

Known as avid gardeners, Hyde Park neighbors have traditionally shared cuttings and transplants of many types, spreading exotic imported species neighbor to neighbor. In recent times, observers have noticed that as Austin's temperatures rise, species from south of here that were once unable to survive Hyde Park winters are spreading and thriving.

Just as the founders of Hyde Park created this forest legacy of cooling shade in the days before air conditioning, so are the current neighbors committed to preserving and renewing it in the face of rising temperatures that are our contemporary reality. Historic preservation is not just about homes and buildings, but about living things as well.

Answers to Tree Quiz on Pages 30-31

1. Cedar Elm
2. Catalpa
3. Sycamore
4. Crepe Myrtle
5. Bur Oak
6. Hackberry
7. Post Oak
8. Pecan

The Austin State Hospital Administration Building

4110 Guadalupe Street

Construction of the Administration Building of the Austin State Hospital – known as the Texas State Lunatic Asylum until 1925 – began in 1857, 150 years ago. It was influenced by the Kirkbride plan for asylums. Thomas Story Kirkbride (1809-1883) thought that architectural design could be therapeutic, with spacious, airy, bright rooms that looked out on pleasant vistas and, as a result, restored disturbed minds. Noted local architect Conrad Stemme (1807-1877) designed the building; its construction was supervised by Abner Cook (1814-1884). It was built of local limestone with layers of sand in the floors to provide both thermal and sound insulation. Its linear plan emphasized a ward system whereby patients could be housed according to their diagnoses: the “noisy insane” could be separated from the “quiet insane” and the “filthy insane” removed from the “clean insane.” The Kirkbride plan addressed

not only the mental health of patients but also their physical health, comfort, and safety. To ensure adequate ventilation, the design incorporated wide hallways, high ceilings, large windows, and transoms. For sanitary purposes, the walls were made of hard plaster that could be easily washed, and the floors sloped toward the doors to facilitate cleaning.

Many asylums of the mid-19th century followed Kirkbride’s directives, which began with admonitions about selection of an appropriate site. A site required at least 100 acres, copious water, and peaceful natural views. It was also supposed to be close enough to town to allow for easy access to provisions and visits from relatives. Texas Governor

Elisha Pease added the stipulation that the property could not cost more than \$5.00 per acre. Early in 1857, the State of Texas purchased 380 post oak-covered acres two miles north of the capitol; it was inhabited at the time by Tonkawas, Lipan Apaches, and Comanches. While most of the original occupants soon moved farther west, some remained as day laborers to help construct the steam tunnels under the building.

Thirty years later the area due east of the asylum became Monroe Shippe’s “streetcar suburb”



Hyde Park. From the beginning, the asylum and the neighborhood maintained cordial relations, with children playing on the grounds and joining patients to watch the outdoor Monday night movies. After Superintendent of Grounds Arthur James Seiders supervised the construction of a new landscape for the facility in the 1890s, the asylum attracted many more visitors. The newly landscaped grounds included a chain of small lakes, culminating in a larger lake adorned with giant lily pads at the southern tip of the property. The beautified grounds often served as a destination for Sunday buggy rides and long walks for courting couples. In the 1920s, many local children liked to report that their parents had met at the State Lunatic Asylum.

Only four of its planned 16 wards were completed by the start of the Civil War, which delayed completion of the project. Additional wings and a neo-classical portico were added later. By that time, however, Kirkbride's linear plan had fallen into disfavor, replaced by the cottage movement, which emphasized that patients were to be housed in smaller, more home-like units.

Post Oak Savanna

On the ASH grounds, note particularly the magnificent post oaks, the survivors of what was once a savanna stretching across the southern part of Hyde Park and still barely traceable from Waller Creek west to Shoal Creek. In the beginning, most of Hyde Park was grassland, with these post oaks, some native pecans, and ancient bur oaks punctuating the prairie.

As the area was developed and paved, the post oaks that had thrived in the riparian gravel underlying southern Hyde Park did not react well and many were lost. Intense development of the apartment complexes along 38th and 39th Streets took an additional heavy toll. Among the few places these trees survive is the tour route, particularly on 41st between Guadalupe and Avenue C, and in the yard of the only owner-occupied single family residence left on the south side of 39th, at the southern end of Avenue C.

In addition to patients, all staff, including the superintendent and his family, lived in the Administration building until a separate residence was built for them in 1879. They and "maiden ladies" employed by the asylum lived on the third floor. Bachelors occupied the basement. If a couple employed by the asylum wanted to marry, they had to secure the permission of the Superintendent, which often depended on the availability of housing for married couples. Children of employees often grew up with "inmates for playmates" and found it natural to work at the hospital just as their parents had, a tradition that lasted for decades.

However, by the 1970s and 1980s, the trend toward community-based mental health care brought about a drastic reduction in the numbers of patients. Currently, the hospital can accommodate three hundred patients. The building now houses the administration and staff of Austin State Hospital and is recognized as the third oldest public building in Texas.

The Schenken-Oatman House

311 W 41st Street

Owned by Restore Hyde Park, LLC

Nine years after its opening in 1891-92, Hyde Park was no longer advertised as “the most aristocratic area in Austin.” In response to the depressed economy, it was now portrayed as a development for the working and middle class. Property could be acquired for the same price as “two beers a day.” For the next several decades, Hyde Park’s architectural character changed and smaller frame houses were constructed. This represented a scaling back of Monroe Shipe’s original plan. More subdued in detailing than their high-style predecessors, often with pre-cut and assembled trim and details, these unassuming dwellings have been dubbed “Folk Victorian.” The next building boom in Hyde Park would occur between 1924 and 1935 when the bungalow was the stylistic idiom.

The first listing for this address can be found in the *Austin City Directory* for 1910: Adelbert F. Schenken was in residence. He was subsequently joined by his sons, Adelbert, Jr. and Ralph. Adelbert was a printer and

worked for a weekly German language newspaper, *Texas Vorwaets*. Because city directories represent a time lag of a year or two, the date of construction of the house can only be estimated as the first decade of the 20th century. Schenken paid off a note on this property in 1901, according to Travis County records.

The house, with its fortunate absence of remodeling and additions, is a time capsule that documents a period of transition between 1890 and 1910 in materials and technology, with regional variations. To cite one example: two widths of beaded paneling survive in the interior; the wider width represents an earlier date. The medallions ornamenting the eave fascia of the front porch are repeated in the trim of the historically-intact interior.

Abundant clues exist to contribute to the restoration of this architectural treasure. An undated photograph in the Austin History Center (PICH 08222) shows the original wood siding as well as wooden Tuscan columns supporting the roof of the front porch, consistent with the medallions on the fascia. 311 West 41st Street is not a contributing structure to the Hyde Park National Register Historic District because it is currently clad in metal siding, but that is being rectified. The hipped



roof of pressed metal is a rare survival dating from the original construction of the house and has protected the house from major deterioration. One remaining crocket detail at the end of the central roof ridge bespeaks a striving for high style. The floor plan, with well-proportioned rooms opening off a central entry hall, includes features of earlier elegant interiors with high ceilings. The dignified presence of

the house may derive from Adelbert Schenken's cultural background. Imminent artist, artisans and intellectuals of German heritage were numbered among his Hyde Park neighbors.

With the advent of World War I, the newspaper where Adelbert had been employed ceased publication, presumably due to anti-German sentiment, and census records track his move to central California. He briefly returned to 41st Street in 1918 to arrange for the disposition of his holdings. By 1922, Pearl N. Oatman had purchased 311 West 41st Street and she lived there until her death in 1973. Her daughter, Pearl Oatman Welch, who inherited the property, was in residence there until 1985, when she moved to Bertram. She retained ownership of the house, which stood vacant until the present.

Why do the Schenken-Oatman house and the Curl-Crockett house face 41st Street rather than a lettered avenue? Research has

Post Oak Survivors

Two more post oaks survive on the grounds of the first house on the tour. The time-capsule nature of this surviving turn of the century home is reflected in the two mature, healthy post oaks on its grounds. Growth rings of a dead post oak recently removed from the same yard indicate that these trees are about the same age as the house itself, probably volunteers chosen to be saved by its earliest residents in the early 1900s. Members of the Austin Historical Landmark Commission cited the presence of these trees in their support for preserving the structure.

revealed that, in the early years of Hyde Park, these properties faced a large green open space. In Shipe's original scheme, this was to be the site of Gem Lake and Crystal Fountain. Although this undivided tract was subdivided in 1903, most of the houses on these blocks were not constructed until the 1920s.

At the December 2006 session of the Historic Landmark Commission, consideration of

the demolition permit sought by the executor of the estate of Pearl Oatman Welch and recommended by Historic Landmark Commission staff was postponed for sixty days while advocates for restoration devised a plan for heroic rescue. In a stunning example of the Hyde Park spirit, eleven contributors pledged capital in sums ranging from \$50,000 to \$10,000 to purchase, restore and resell the house, with the understanding that the project may not produce a profit. While preserving the historic fabric, the result will be a comfortable 21st century, owner-occupied residence. A rare example of the egalitarian second phase of Hyde Park development has been saved to continue as a significant historical feature of the neighborhood and of Austin.

The Curl-Crockett House

213 W 41st Street

Owned by Nick and Linda van Bavel

The Curl-Crockett House, constructed in 1893-94, is one of the oldest houses in the Hyde Park Historic District. It epitomizes the rise and fall of the Hyde Park neighborhood: built as the home of a noted state official and owned by other respected citizens, it gradually fell into decline until it was unsympathetically divided into apartments in the 1950s. The van Bavels, who recently acquired the house, have restored it and made it again a neighborhood showpiece.

Sited on a large corner lot, the house was built for lawyer and politician James R. Curl (1851-1905), Chief Clerk of the Texas State Department from 1891 to 1895 and Secretary of State (appointed by Gov. Samuel W. T. Lanham) from 1903 until his death from cancer at age 54.

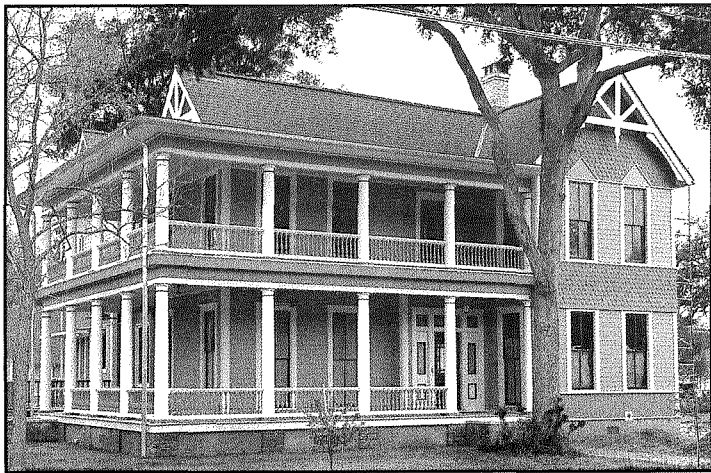
In 1869, Curl married his first cousin, Fannie Renfro, at Larissa, Cherokee County. She died eight years later. In 1881 he wed her younger sister Ada, with whom he had seven children. His family lived in comfort and socialized

with such distinguished figures of the day as Gov. James Hogg and his daughter Ima. Unfortunately, after Curl's death, financial loss due to bad investments caused the younger Curl children to be sent to the Masonic Home in Fort Worth.

On September 23, 1893, Curl bought four lots in the fledgling Hyde Park suburb from the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Land and Town Company for \$825. Almost immediately the Curls contracted with Preston S. Hopkins to build "a two story frame building of seven rooms with closets, bath room, halls, galleries and foundations of brick piers, with two brick chimneys and one brick flue for a dwelling house with yard fence.... for the sum of \$1800." Four month later, however,

a new Builder's Lien was filed with J. J. Brydson to finish the incomplete structure at a cost of \$785. Its little-known architect, Jabez R. Wyard, practiced in Austin from 1887-1910.

The Curl House was built in a T-plan, with three rooms upstairs and downstairs in the main block and likely a rear-ell or detached kitchen. The exterior of the house contains fine Eastlake detailing, particularly in the lateral gable on the entrance (north) elevation; these fine late Victorian elements, masked by gray paint for decades,



are once again decorated in period-style contrasting colors.

The two-tiered, wrap-around verandah supported by Doric columns, a prominent feature when the house was displayed in *Austin City of the Violet Crown* (1917), the city's major architectural brag book of the early 20th century, shows a classical influence that contrasts with the Eastlake vocabulary of the main block. Tax records record a jump in the property value from \$1,135 in 1907 to \$1,900 in 1909, which coincides with the period when some one-story Victorian porches in Austin were being replaced by two-story, Colonial Revival porches, both to modernize appearance and to provide a shaded area below and a sleeping porch above.

Over the next twenty years, after Curl sold the house, the property changed hands several times. Owners included Judge Henry Faulk, known for his later home (Green Pastures) and his progeny, and Otto Ebeling and his wife Emilie Giesecke, both members of noted German-Texan families.

Harry Lee Crockett (1872-1947), proprietor of the Crockett Produce Company, and his wife, Corabel, occupied the house longest, from 1920 until 1943. During the next decade, it had eight different owners. By 1958, it had been divided into five apartments. Numerous tenants, some with blue and white collar occupations and some

Native Majesty

This magnificently restored grand old home is surrounded by native species, including the impressive landmark cedar elm in the house's front yard on the 41st Street side. Just outside the riparian gravel of the post oak savanna, the subsurface beneath this portion of Hyde Park and this home, is largely thick, gummy clay. This cedar elm, sometimes referred to as a spring herald because of its early spring leafing, is one of the most widespread Texas native species and obviously has flourished in Hyde Park soil.

students, occupied the property over a 60-year period. Bevo, the U.T. mascot, may have visited while the house was occupied by a fraternity.

The interior of the house was considerably altered for its use as apartments. The second floor of the verandah was enclosed, though many Doric columns remained in place within the enclosed areas. The interior staircase

was moved to the front porch. Bathrooms and kitchens were created for the apartments, but most of the principal rooms retained their shapes.

The house has been waiting for sympathetic rehabilitation. Guided by architects David Webber and Lotte Vehko, contractor Peter Dick has restored both the exterior and interior of the main block. A deteriorated rear wing was approximated, separated from the main block by a glass hyphen, and a garage was added. Owners Nick and Linda van Bavel have prepared the house for its next 114 years.

The Crutchfield House

4001 Avenue G

Owned by B. McClelland and Family

This vernacular early Texas home commands a prized corner lot in Hyde Park's earliest development area. A block from founder Monroe Shipe's own home, it may have been completed even earlier. It first appears in the 1905 *Austin City Directory* as the home of Alfred B. Clarkson, a bookkeeper for the Driskill Hotel.

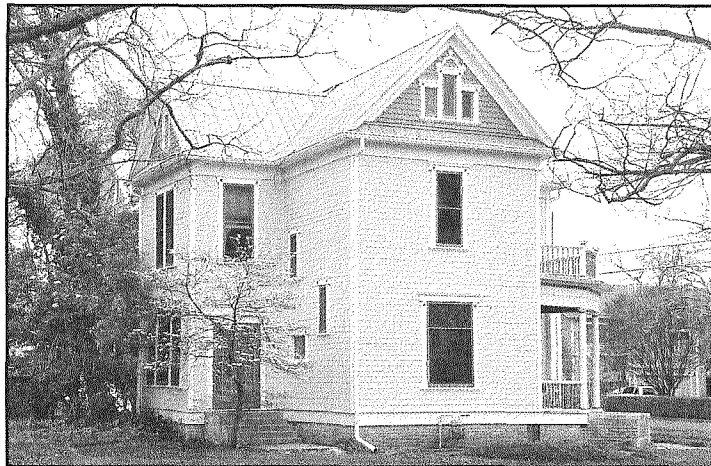
The home is most closely identified with the Crutchfield family, who occupied it for more than half a century. Cicero Cohran (C.C.)

Crutchfield, Sr. and his wife Melba rented the house for several years before purchasing it in 1944. They raised a daughter, Margaret, and two sons, C.C., Jr. and John. C.C. Crutchfield, Sr., a field representative for what later became the Texas Municipal League, traveled throughout the state on League business. Shipe himself was still a part of living memory when the Crutchfields moved to Hyde Park: John remembers the developer being called "Ol' Fire Bug" because of Shipe's penchant for torching weeds on his vacant lots.

The Crutchfields erected a parakeet aviary on the southeast corner of the lot and dug a fish pond in the back yard. C.C., Sr. and Melba, avid gardeners, planted caladiums, iris, cannas, and banana trees around the pond. John remembers planting the three pecan trees in the front yard in 1947. The sidewalk recently completed along both 40th Street and Avenue G preserves John's boyhood mark, JC 52, in a rough patch on the 40th-street side.

The Crutchfields, eager to pass their home to another appreciative family, sold the house in 1996 to its current owners, UT faculty members. The current owners have authentically restored the century-old home and updated it to serve the contemporary needs of a family with teenaged twins. The upstairs screened porch, where the Crutchfields slept before air conditioning, was enclosed and a new side entrance added as part of a two-story rear addition designed by Hyde Park architects McGraw Marburger and Associates. The addition, which merges seamlessly with the original structure, includes an expanded kitchen, back stairway, updated master suite, family room, and back porch.

The Tuscan columns of the front porch and the dentils atop the entablature were restored. A



period neo-classical balustrade was added above and the entire structure repainted to accentuate such period details as the scalloped shingles of the front most pediment and the distinctive carved disks that occur in woodwork throughout both exterior and interior of the home.

Inside, three successive renovation projects stretching over ten years restored the home's original formal front staircase and coal-burning fireplace and mantle. The front parlor, staircase, dining room and butler's pantry were restored with original fixtures and hardware and furnished with legacy pieces from the early 20th century. Authentic period stained glass and hardware from around the world were acquired on eBay; the glass was incorporated in both new and updated baths, upstairs and down, and the upper frames of the windows in the new family room. Original carved floral surrounds of the disk woodwork details were hand replicated by the current owner's father. Cherry finished original kitchen cabinets were matched by new cabinetry in the expanded kitchen.

Grounds of the home, where the Crutchfields tended a Victory Garden during World War II, have been stripped of invasive species

Family Trees

Recently re-landscaped with native species, this stately early Texas home is graced with three mature pecan trees that John Crutchfield, whose family inhabited the house for more than 50 years, remembers planting in 1947. Many of the pecans that are the hallmark of Hyde Park were improved grafts developed and sold by Frank Ramsey. One of the enticements for buying lots in Hyde Park was the suggestion that such prolific pecan producers might produce enough cash each year to pay property taxes. Older residents insisted on topping out these trees, a practice frowned upon today, in order to produce still more pecans. These pecans were spared this treatment; fortunately, many of our other older trees have survived it.

and re-landscaped by Hyde Park landscape designer Jill Nokes. Jill removed a dead Arizona ash and aggressive ligustrum plants and restored an heirloom garden of Texas native Mexican plum, Anacacho orchid, mountain laurel, and other drought-resistant species as well as pass-along and old Austin neighborhood standards including old variety roses, cannas, black eyed susans, and phlox.

The owners are now working with Hyde Park architect Sarah Swearer on a complementary new structure to replace the existing

backyard garage, already present when the Crutchfields moved in. They have offered salvaged materials from the garage demolition to the Schenken-Oatman restoration project (311 W. 41st).

Today the Crutchfield House faces its second century as a comfortable family home, contributing to the Hyde Park National Historic Register District and its potential Local Historic District. It is a signal example of how restoration and modern living can go happily hand in hand.

Jill Nokes is the author of *How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest* (second edition, UT Press, 2001) and *Yard Art and Handmade Places: Extraordinary Expressions of Home* (UT Press, 2007).

The Dickinson House

4008 Avenue H

Owners: Chris Brown and Lindsay Nakashima

This Craftsman bungalow is a beautiful example of what homeowners can accomplish with limited funds but with patience, energy, and an artistic eye. When Chris Brown and Lindsay Nakashima bought the house, they weren't pleased with many of its details but lacked the money to make major changes. Instead, Lindsay undertook the work herself, investing in materials as their budget allowed and recycling almost all the materials she replaced.

The history of the property dates back to 1927, when Earl K. Dickinson, the manager of the optical department at Griffith Drug Company, and his wife Bessie purchased the lot from the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Land and Town Company. A dramatic increase in the value of the property (from \$220 to \$2000) indicates that the house was built the same year. In 1947, the Dickinsons added a rear frame addition. After they vacated the house in 1969, it became rental property. The names of residents between 1969 and 1977 - often multiple residents but with

different surnames - suggest that the renters were college students. Richard and Cynthia Streiff purchased the property in 1977. A construction worker by trade, Richard Streiff added a separate structure in 1977. The current owners purchased the house in 2003.

Lindsay, great niece of woodworker and architect George Nakashima, brings to her design of space both a keen eye and an aesthetic acquired during time spent in Japan. Working with architect Tim Cuppelt, she developed a plan to reinvent the interior and exterior space with minimal structural changes. Motivated by the belief that "bigger is *not* better," she maximized the available space without drastically changing it. She repainted, added built-in shelves and cabinets, and matched the hardware wherever possible. She designed both the

over-the-door wall cabinet in their son's bedroom and the monorail light fixture in the kitchen. Closets were redesigned with built-in shelving to eliminate the need for dressers. Because the back bedroom had no closet, it became the family room, with floor-to-ceiling shelves that expose their maple veneer. A bedroom door was moved further down the hallway to provide an unbroken space for artwork. While transforming the interior, Lindsay imbued it with a soft, open, Japanese feeling, com-



plemented by the handcrafted furniture in the living room. The pieces of artwork are contributions from family members.

The grounds were transformed as well, incorporating ideas from both Lindsay and consulting architect Tim Cuppett. Cuppett reorganized the back yard to focus on its center piece, a landmark oak tree, altering the circulation of the yard to loop around the tree. The tree, a beautiful example of Hyde Park's mature tree canopy, was pruned and saved from disease. Cuppett also added the entrance landing stair and sidewalks and renovated the dilapidated existing garage to expand its use into covered porch/carport, art studio, and storage. He opened the guest house wall to face the tree and added metal canopies to entrances, both for practical comfort and to aesthetically unify the different structures. Lindsay was advised to keep these buildings because, under current zoning, once torn down they could not be rebuilt.

The configuration of the outdoor space, one of Lindsay and Chris's greatest satisfactions, encourages people to participate in the space. A small patio area invites you into the space under the carport. To construct the patio, a fence was removed between the house and the

Deep Shade

As you follow the tour up Avenue H, note the towering bur oaks near the curb adjacent to the driveway and in the back yard of this lovingly restored 1920s bungalow. These magnificent specimens are among the most prized examples in Hyde Park. Unlike the development-intolerant post oak, the fast growing, long-lived bur oak adapts well to different soil conditions by sinking a deep, drought-resistant taproot. Its broad, hand-sized leaves produce a deep shade. Many bur oaks are planted along streets in Hyde Park, because they are recommended and often used in city reforestation programs. The carefully tended, mature specimens at this home display these lovely trees with room to grow, demonstrating their potential in full.

side fence. With this fence gone, the space became open and airy. The patio, with its simple lines and lack of obstructions, connects the front and back yards. The driveway was narrowed by removing a few feet of concrete - a heat attractor for the house - and pebbles and plants were added to increase coolness. Gutters, a rain cistern, metal roofs on the outside buildings, French drains, lighting, air-conditioning, new screens, and re-grading of the back yard are all examples of Lindsay's improvements.

Concrete was replaced with white pebbles that bring light into the yard and offer the eyes a respite. The wooden back fence was replaced by an open-weave wire fence. Lindsay planted bamboo around the deck to create privacy, stair-stepping the stones to bring the bamboo further into the yard to block the view from the alley. The west side of the house is planted with drought-resistant plants, another example of low-water landscaping. The full effect of Lindsay's efforts will develop slowly over years, as her plantings reach maturity.



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The Rhodes House

4115 Avenue H • Featured on *This Old House*

Owned by Michele Grieshaber & Michael Klug

Although the provenance of 4115 Avenue H is somewhat uncertain – city records do not indicate the precise date in the mid-1920s this Craftsman bungalow was built – this airy, sun-filled home has more than made up for its obscure birth. This winter, the home's renovation was featured in eight episodes of PBS's long-running, landmark *This Old House* series, covered by several of the state's newspapers, and documented in three issues of *This Old House* magazine. Michele Grieshaber and Michael Klug, the home's owners, transformed the two-bedroom, one-bath into a four-bedroom, two-bath house using entirely "green" processes and materials. They chose contractor Bill Moore of William T. Moore Construction, one of the first green builders in town, to do the job. *This Old House* leapt at the opportunity to showcase its first green remodel (not to mention its first Texas renovation) and began taping last October. The goal was to attain the coveted five-star rat-

ing from Austin's Green Building program; of some 7,000 green-rated homes in Austin, only 35 have received a five-star rating.

The home's first owners, Frank and Emma Rhodes, immigrated to Austin from England in the early 1880s. Some member of the Rhodes family lived in the house from 1926 until 1989. To preserve the home's original design, including its high rooflines, overhanging eaves, and natural air flow, Michele and Michael – who were married last year and whose household includes Michael's two sons – asked their architect, David Webber, to design a second floor compatible with the original 1,500-square-foot house. The new second floor bumps up the original roofline by only six feet and contains the master bedroom and

bathroom, a landing area which doubles as a library/office, and an expansive balcony.

Although the house is now 50 percent larger, it will cost an estimated \$700 less to heat and cool per year because of the owners' eco-friendly building choices. The great majority of the home's lighting consists of either LED lighting, 10 times more efficient than incandescent lights, or compact fluorescent bulbs, three to four times more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs and emitting far less heat. The couple



has a distaste for cranking up the AC, but because of the open-cell polyurethane foam protecting the house, they could install a new highly energy-efficient three-ton HVAC unit rather than the five-ton unit a house this size would normally require. The roof's solar panels harvest 2,400 watts of solar electricity and the toilets use only 1.3 gallons of water per flush.

The couple's eco-enthusiasm extended to the materials they chose: the "wood" on the balcony of the second floor is composed half of recycled wood and half recycled plastic. The upstairs doors feature reclaimed wood from Gonzales, Texas, and some of the flooring is wood salvaged from a recently disassembled 1890 Massachusetts textile mill. The kitchen countertops and master bathroom sink surround are made of IceStone, a new material made in Brooklyn, New York of a mix of recycled glass bottles and cement. The bathroom tiles are composed of granite dust, broken window panes, and brown and white bottles. Though Austin's Green Building program does not certify ipé, the Brazilian wood in the downstairs screened porch, as sustainably harvested, its manufacturer asserts that it is grown in an environmentally friendly manner. The owners chose low-volatile

Sheltering Sycamores

Although this tastefully enlarged, energy efficient Craftsman bungalow is a star of both PBS *This Old House* and the City of Austin's Green Building program, one of the home's energy saving features is not built into the house or even on the same lot: It is the leaves and branches of the towering landmark sycamore trees across Avenue H from the home, on the southwest corner of Avenue H and 42nd. These trees, which could well have been planted by Shipe himself, and the pecans in the home's front yard save energy by sheltering the home from the blistering summer afternoon sunlight and heat load. Like many of Hyde Park's grandest trees, they benefit not only the homeowners directly below them but grateful neighbors as well.

organic compound paints, both for the health of the painters and because of the paint's longevity.

Tourists will also want to check out the environmentally sensitive landscaping. Only a small patch of the yard is given over to thirsty St. Augustine grass, while native plants such as American beautyberry, a loquat tree, and Texas betony are highlighted. The south side is blanketed by pine-straw mulch, which bestows nutrients on plants and soil as it breaks down. In the back yard, note the

1,200-gallon rainwater collection system, which feeds a drip-irrigation system.

With the kind of thoughtful, meticulous planning the owners, architect, and contractor devoted to the home's renovation, it's no wonder the house was given a five-star rating from Austin's Green Builders Program.

For more information about the home and a blog from owner Michele Grieshaber about its renovation, check out <http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/tvprograms/house-project/overview/0,16542,1546552,00.html>.

To find out more about Austin's Green Building Program, access <http://www.austinenrgy.com/Energy%20Efficiency/Programs/Green%20Building/index.htm>.

The Wright-Dunlap House

4108 Avenue G

Owners: Andrew and Melissa Shea

The Wright-Dunlap House was sturdily built in 1915 by Louise H. Wright, a single woman who never married or lived in the house she built. However, she created a wonderful, bungalow-influenced house that sheltered two Hyde Park families for many years before finally entering the care of its present owners, Andrew and Melissa Shea.

According to the *Austin City Directory*, it was first occupied in 1916 by William S. Brandenberger, a member of the State Board of Examiners of the Texas Board of Education and an investor in Hyde Park Addition No. 1. From 1917 to 1920, Miss Wright first rented the house and then sold it, in 1920, to William R. Nabours, chief appraiser for the State Board of Control, for \$4250. He lived there with his wife, Faye, until 1923, when he in turn sold the house to Arthur Hoyt Dunlap, a Member of the State Board of Water Engineers.

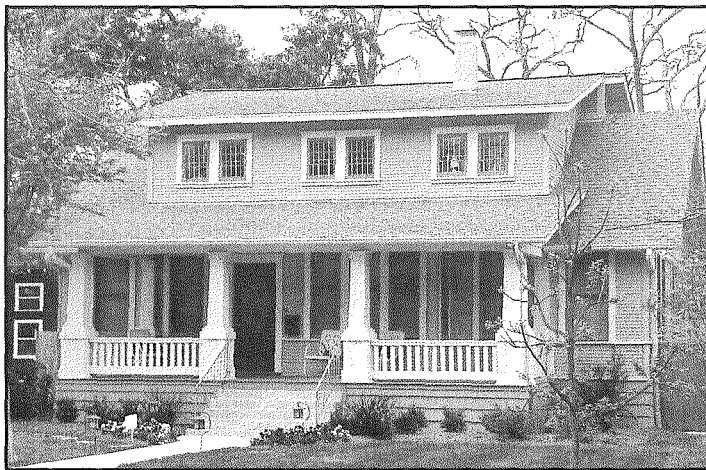
Mr. Dunlap moved to Austin

from Barstow, Texas, with his wife, Ophal Young Dunlap, and five children, ranging in age from 10 to an infant. The house remained the family homestead until 1970, 47 years, even after Mr. Dunlap died in 1944. The Dunlaps' best-known child, Mary Lois Dunlap, graduated from the University of Texas with B.S. and M.S. degrees in education. She taught in public school until she joined the American Red Cross during World War II and served in the Philippines. After the war, she earned her M.S. in social welfare and became a social worker with the State Welfare Department in Austin. When she died in 1964, she was living with her mother in their family home.

During the years when Ophal Dunlap lived there as a widow, the

house was divided into a duplex and probably provided a much-needed source of income. Mrs. Dunlap finally sold it to a widow, Louita D. Wilson, in 1970, but Louita never lived there. Two years later she sold it to R. Scott and Barbara Lyford for \$18,946.

The first change made to the house by the Lyfords in 1973 was to enlarge the back porch to the space it occupies today and screen it. In 1982, they converted the house back to a single family home and raised the peak of the roof two feet in order to add shed



dormers and a second full bedroom on the second floor. At that time the kitchen, which was in the room to the right of the front door, received a much-needed updating with new cabinets and a dishwasher - at last!

The present owners, Andrew and Melissa Shea, came from California in 2004 and fell in love with the Hyde Park neighborhood. After a few months of looking, they finally found a house that had great "bones." They decided, with guidance from their architect, Lotte Vehko, to create a more open floor plan while preserving the historic detailing of the Craftsman period in which the house was built. Walls were removed downstairs to enlarge the living room and to open the back for the airy kitchen. Where there were originally nine rooms downstairs, there are now six large rooms. The bath was moved from the center of the house to the right side, and a convenient office - flooded with light from large windows - evolved in the left rear corner. The previous kitchen and hall under the stairs became the master bedroom, with modern bath and walk-in closets. Upstairs, walls were rearranged to transform the space into two large bedrooms and a full bath for the Sheas' little girl.

During the design and construction, Andrew and Melissa were

Pass-Along-Plants

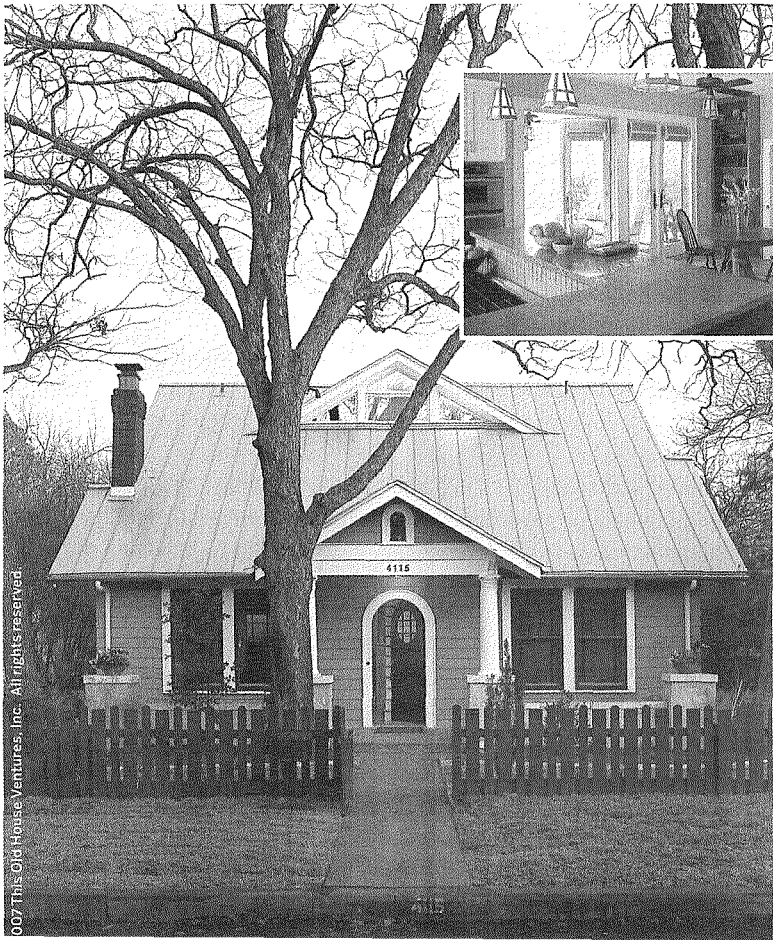
This house, one of the neighborhood's finest examples of a restored arts and crafts home, is surrounded not only by bur oaks and pecans but also by a mysterious tree in the backyard whose origin and species are a matter of debate and speculation. Could it be one of those pass-along plants Hyde Park gardeners so love to share and trade? The current owners of this home have been given different names for the tree by different landscapers. We lean toward the honey locust, not as common in this part of Texas as further east and known by varied enough names to sow confusion: the sweet locust, thorny (or thornless) locust, sweet bean tree, or - our favorite - the honey shucks locust.

careful to preserve as much of the original house as possible. The original wooden windows, exterior trim, siding, and wood floors remain. Some of the interior window and door trim pieces were replaced due to the wear they had received over the years, but they have shapes and dimensions consistent with the bungalow style, thanks to the careful carpentry work of builder Larry Anderson. Many traditional arts and crafts features are intact, from the tiled fireplace to the original bathroom

sink in the powder room. Equipped with knowledge of the period, Melissa searched on eBay and found several light fixtures that are either reproductions or authentic from the period.

Outdoors, the front yard and house are shaded by wonderful, huge burr oak trees. The large screened porch and stained concrete patio invite you into the back yard and play house. This house is an old gem that has kept its bungalow charm while becoming more open, convenient, and modern.



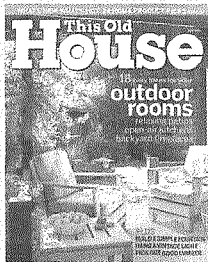


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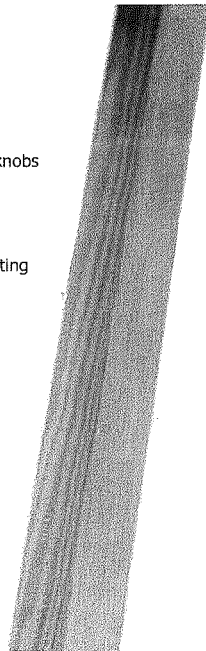
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Michele Grieshaber and Michael Klug would like to thank these local area businesses that contributed to their beautiful home renovation, recently featured on the PBS program "This Old House"

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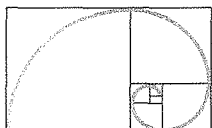




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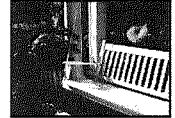
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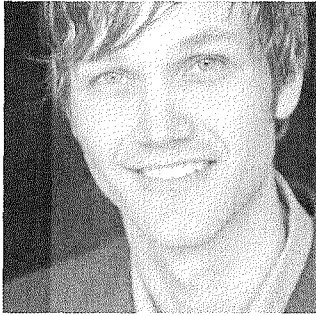


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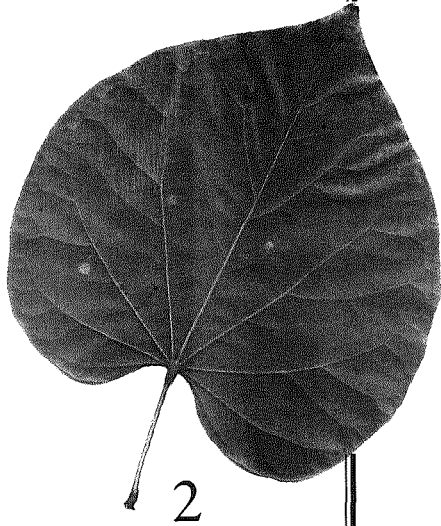
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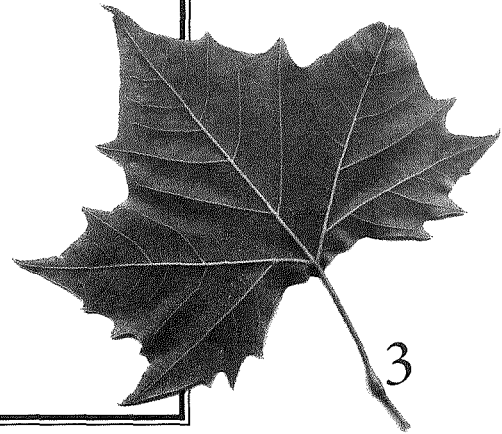
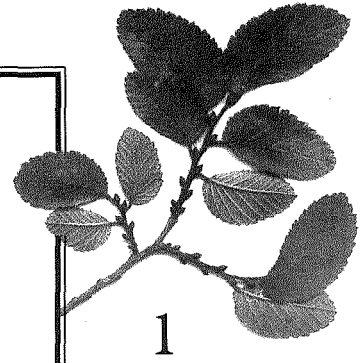
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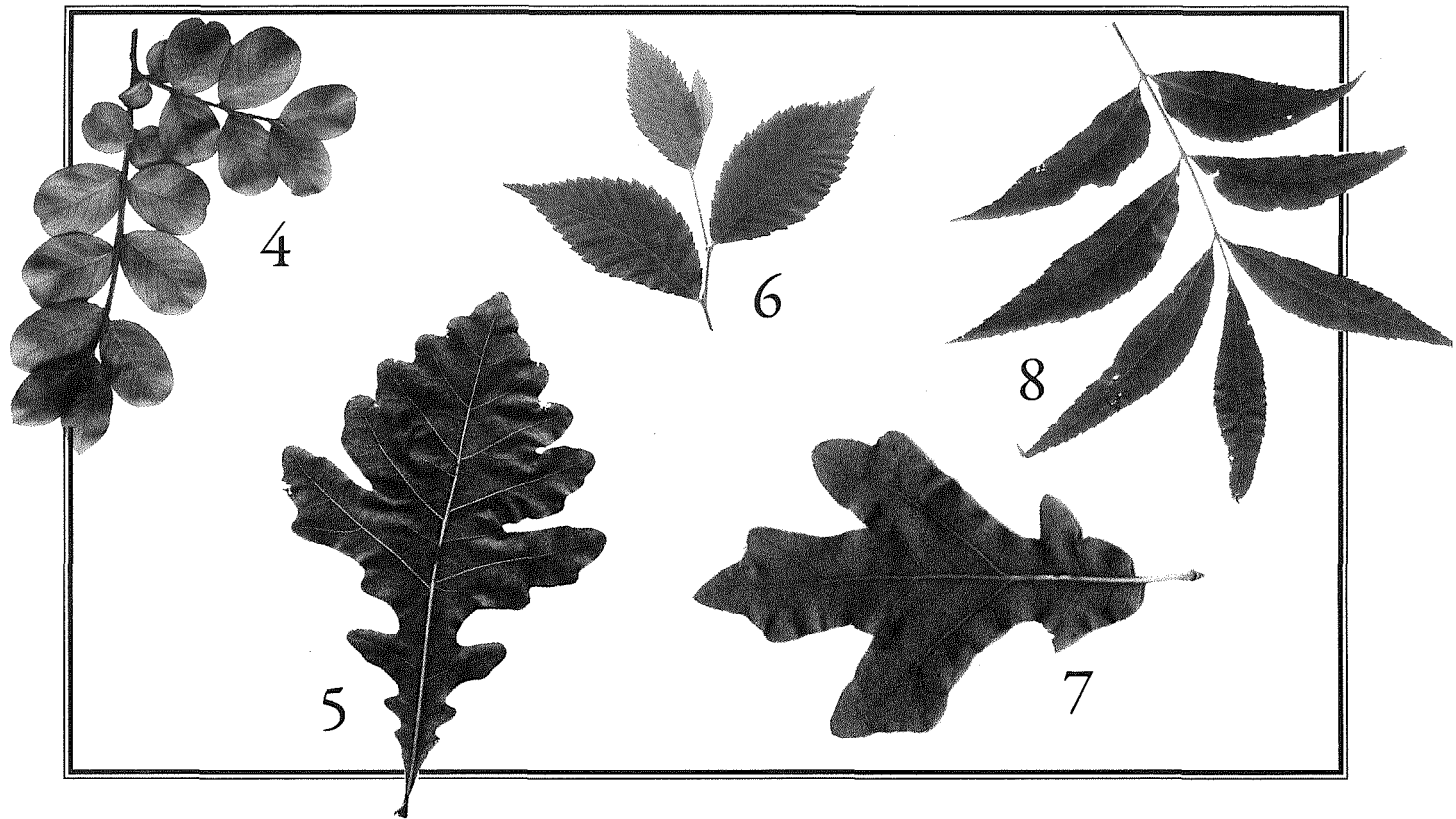
Can you identify and name these leaves?

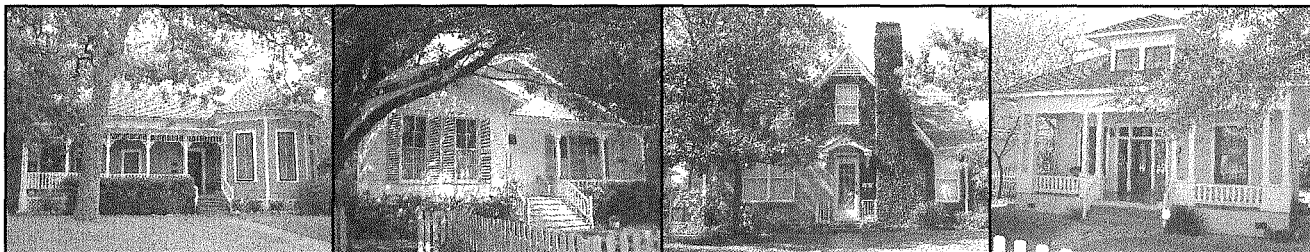


Cedar Elm
Bur Oak
Catalpa
Pecan
Post Oak
Hackberry
Sycamore
Crepe Myrtle



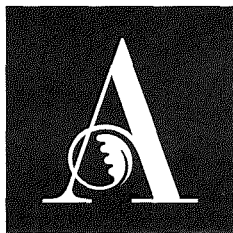
(Answers on page 5)





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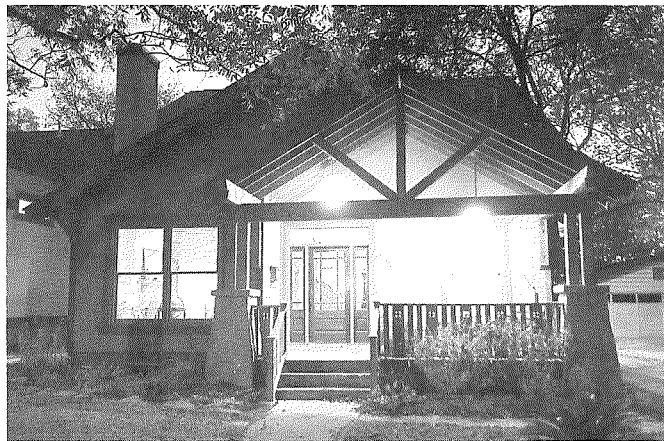
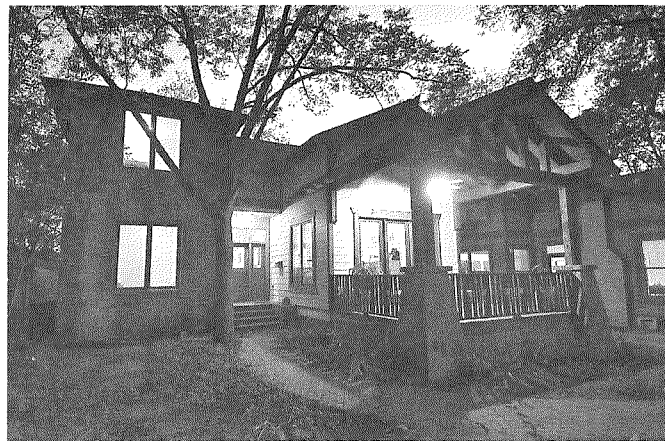


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