

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 24, 2012
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2012-0282
2822 RIO GRANDE STREET**

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1913 house.

ARCHITECTURE

Two-story irregular-plan front-gabled and hipped-roof frame house with a one-story, partial-width flat-roofed independent porch on paired plain square wood posts with X-joints between the two; 1:1 fenestration with wooden screens to give the appearance of 6:6 windows.

RESEARCH

This house has significant associations with several prominent members of the University of Texas academic community, starting with Walter S. Hunter, who is the first known owner and occupant of the house. Hunter had just become an instructor in psychology at UT when he bought this house. He lived here from around 1913 to around 1916, when he moved to Kansas to teach at the University of Kansas. Albert and Cleo Rice Brogan are the next known occupants of the house – they rented here from around 1916 to around 1923. Albert Brogan taught philosophy at the University of Texas, served as chair of the Department of Philosophy, and as Dean of the Graduate School at UT. His later home, on West Avenue, is a designated city historic landmark. His wife, Cleo Rice Brogan, was the daughter of a prominent judge on the Court of Civil Appeals. Her sister, Mary Rice, was the head librarian of the Austin Public Library for many years, and another sister married Stanley Finch, another prominent professor at the University of Texas.

The house was vacant in the mid-1920s, then occupied by a series of renters through the 1930s. Marcelle Lively Hamer rented the house from around 1934 to around 1941, while she served as the director of the Texas Collection at the University of Texas Library. Ms. Hamer was also a well-known folkloricist, working with many of the notable authors and collectors in the field of folklore.

Around 1941, Mrs. Nellie Berkman, the widow of retired farmer Alfred Berkman, purchased the house and lived here until around 1946. Both Nellie and Alfred Berkman had been born in Sweden. Alfred Berkman grew up in the Govalle area of southeastern Travis County, and farmed in the Corpus Christi area for many years before returning to Austin and retiring. He died in 1938; Nellie bought this house several years later. There was a series of owner-occupants in the late 1940s and early 1950s, then the house was purchased by John S. (Jack) and Mazie Birge. Jack Birge had been involved in commercial advertising in El Paso in the 1930s – he died suddenly in this house in 1958. Mazie and Eloise Birge continued to live in the house until their deaths in 1977. The two women appear to have been recluses – their bodies were found in the house after neighbors noticed unread newspapers in the yard and the mailman reported that the mail had not been collected for several days.

STAFF COMMENTS



The house is listed as a Priority 2 for research in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Encourage relocation over demolition but release the permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package consisting of photographs of all elevations, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history of the house.

LOCATION MAP



 SUBJECT TRACT
 ZONING BOUNDARY

CASE#: HDP-2012-0282
 LOCATION: 2822 Rio Grande Street



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.
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2822 Rio Grande Street
ca. 1913



OCCUPANCY HISTORY 2822 Rio Grande Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
February, 2007

1987	Vacant
1981	Capitol Lodge, Alpha Enterprises, Chris Nicks, manager NOTE: Neither Capitol Lodge nor Alpha Enterprises is listed in the directory.
1975	Mrs. Mazie Birge, owner Widow, Jack S. Birge No occupation listed Also listed is L. Eloise Birge, retired.
1969	Mrs. Mazie Birge, owner Widow, Jack Birge

No occupation listed
Also listed is L. Eloise Birge, retired

½: Vacant

1963 Mrs. Mazie Birge, owner
Widow, Jack Birge
No occupation listed

½: Bill Rogers, renter
Student

B: James Martin, renter
Student

1959 Mrs. Eloise D. Birge, renter
Widow, J.S. Birge
No occupation listed

½: Vacant

1955 Vacant

1952 Charlotte H. Boeck, renter
Widow, George Boeck
No occupation listed

1949 Charlotte, Boeck, owner
Widow, George Boeck
No occupation listed

1947 Glen F. and Mary Breckenridge, owners
Salesman, Steck Company

1944-45 Nellie Berkman, owner
Widow, Alfred Berkman
No occupation listed

1942 Nellie Berkman, renter
Widow, Alfred Berkman
No occupation listed

1940 Marcelle Lively Hamer, renter
Assistant in the Texas Collection, University of Texas

1937 Mrs. Marcelle L. Hamer, renter
Assistant in the Texas Collection, University of Texas

1935 Mrs. Marcelle L. Hamer, renter
Student, University of Texas

1932-33 J. William and Lillian Mason, renters

- Education director, University Baptist Church
Also listed is Jacob W. Mason, Jr., a student at UT.
- 1930-31 Henry W. and Mittie Harris, renters
Traveling salesman
Also listed is H.W. Harris, Jr., a soda dispenser
- Mrs. Leona Hardin
Nurse
- 1929 James E. and Mary B. Hill, renters
Headlight engineer, State Highway Department
- 1927 Vacant
- 1924 Vacant
- 1922 Albert P. and Cleo R. Brogan, renters
Adjunct professor of Philosophy, University of Texas
- 1920 Albert P. and Cleo R. Brogan, renters
Adjunct professor of Philosophy, University of Texas
- 1918 Albert P. and Cleo R. Brogan, renters
Adjunct professor of Philosophy, University of Texas
- 1916 Walter S. Hunter
Adjunct professor of Psychology, University of Texas
- 1914 Walter S. Hunter
Instructor in Philosophy, University of Texas
- 1912-13 The address is not listed in the directory..

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

WALTER S. HUNTER (ca. 1913 – ca. 1917)

Hunter, Walter S.

Walter Samuel **Hunter** (1889-1954), professor of psychology, was born in Decatur, Illinois, on March 22, 1889. In 1901, after the death of his mother, he and his brother were taken by their father to live on his grandfather's farm in Saginaw, Texas, where Walter attended a two-room school until 1905, when he was admitted to the Preparatory School of the Polytechnic College in Fort Worth. It was there that he read William James, and decided to become a psychologist. After two years at the Polytechnic College, he transferred to the University of Texas, where he took all the available psychology courses, earned \$15 a month as an assistant to Dr. C. S. Yoakum in his final year, and conducted a study using a homemade cage in the backyard of his rooming house, which was later published as "Some labyrinth habits of the domestic pigeon." On graduation from the University of Texas in 1910, he was awarded a scholarship for study at the University of Chicago. His dissertation for his doctorate in 1912 was *Delayed Reaction in Animals and Children*.

Hunter became an instructor at the University of Texas in 1912, adjunct professor at the University of Kansas in 1916, and the first G. Stanley Hall Professor of Genetic Psychology at Clark University in 1925. In the First World War he left Kansas for sixteen months to be chief psychological examiner in three Army camps. At Clark he was able to teach graduate students and devote time to research. His students worked on the sensory control of the maze habit in rats, and Hunter himself in his nine years at Clark published 21 experimental papers, five theoretical studies, four chapters in books, a textbook, *Human Behavior*, and served on committees of the American Psychological Association and the National

Research Council. In 1936 he came to Brown to replace Leonard Carmichael. He stayed for the rest of his life. Also in 1936 Hunter was appointed Chairman of the Division of Anthropology and Psychology of the National Research Council. During the Second World War he was Chairman of the Applied Psychology Panel of the National Defense Research Committee. He received the Presidential Medal of Merit in 1948. He was editor of *Psychological Index* from 1926 to its termination in 1936, and editor of *Psychological Abstracts* from 1926 until 1946, when he resigned because he thought twenty years was long enough for a single editor. He resigned the chairmanship of the Psychology Department on his 65th birthday in March 1954. A few months later after returning from a trip he suffered a sudden coronary occlusion and died in Providence on August 3, 1954. Remembering him at the dedication of the Hunter Laboratory of Psychology in 1958, Leonard Carmichael said, "Dr. Hunter early became one of the leading exponents of an enlightened objective and behavioristic psychology that has now come to be almost synonymous with scientific psychology in this country."

ALBERT and CLEO RICE BROGAN (ca. 1917 – ca. 1923)

IN MEMORIAM

ALBERT PERLEY BROGAN

Albert Perley Brogan, who taught at The University of Texas at Austin from 1914 to 1963 and served as Dean of the Graduate School from 1936 to 1959, died in San Antonio on April 9, 1983, at the age of 93. As the University now celebrates its first hundred years, we may look back at Brogan's almost 50 years of active service at the University as coinciding with the very heart of its growth from an institution of more ambition than accomplishment to a genuine university of the first rank. In particular, it was during that period that graduate studies at the University first came into international prominence and took its place among the very best of such programs in the world. During the period no contribution to the development of the University was more important, more seminal, or more lasting than that of Dr. Brogan.

Albert was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on July 22, 1889, the son of Francis Albert and Maude Haskell (Perley) Brogan. He had one brother, Maurice. His father was an outstanding attorney who had a fine library. Even before his high school days Albert became an avid reader of material in his father's library. This concerned his father. He thought Albert should be more active in the outside world, and to encourage him his father bought some acreage just outside Omaha and on it built a small barn, a chicken house, and corrals for cattle and hogs. For several years Albert was responsible for caring for the acreage and the animals on it.

In 1907 he became a student at the University of Nebraska, where he remained until he entered Harvard University in 1909. He received his B.A. at Harvard in 1911 with a major in literature, an A.M. in 1912, and a Ph.D. in philosophy in 1914 with a dissertation on logical relations. While at Harvard he developed a great love and expertise in the three areas of philosophy with which he continued to concern himself for the remainder of his

career -- logic, value theory and ethics, and ancient philosophy, especially that of Aristotle. During his last semester at Harvard in the spring of 1914, Brogan was one of six students in a famous seminar given by Bertrand Russell on logical theory. This was Russell's first teaching visit to the United States, and he brought with him unpublished material from an unknown philosopher by the name of Ludwig Wittgenstein for class study. Russell was much taken with these students (though with little else at Harvard) as well as with another of Brogan's fellow students, T. S. Eliot.

Dr. Brogan's service at The University of Texas began in 1914 when he was hired as an Instructor of Philosophy. The University had a student enrollment of 2,200 students and maybe as many as a hundred faculty members. He filled the vacancy left by Sidney Edward Mezes, Professor of Philosophy and President of the University, who had resigned. Though he had other offers of teaching posts, Brogan chose to accept the position at Texas because, it is said, he was taken with the promise of the school and wanted to contribute to its growth. Upon his appointment courses were added in Greek philosophy, Cartesian philosophy ("a study of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz" as the catalogue described it), and, for the first time, advanced logic. What had been the School of Philosophy (one of the original six schools when the University was founded) became the School of Philosophy and Psychology in 1915, though courses of the two areas were listed separately. This arrangement continued until 1927, when the School was split into the two present departments.

He was married to Mary Cleo Rice on September 26, 1916. Miss Rice was born in Marlin, Texas, the daughter of Judge Ben H. Rice and Mary Carter Rice. She had three brothers and four sisters. The Rice family had moved to Austin in 1907 when Judge Rice was appointed to the Court of Civil Appeals. During the Fall semester of 1915 Cleo Rice enrolled in a course in ethics taught by Albert. Courtship between the two began shortly after the course was completed in the early spring of 1916. They

had two children, Mary Rice, who died in 1977, and Francis Albert, who is a retired engineer now living in San Antonio. Frank received his degree in physics and chemistry from The University of Texas and had two sons, each of whom received engineering degrees from The University of Texas.

In 1917 Brogan was promoted to Adjunct Professor and became Chairman of the Department, a post in which he served until 1920. The University had achieved an enrollment of 7,000 students by 1920, but from 1918 until that year only Brogan and G. Watts Cunningham taught courses in philosophy. Brogan was promoted to Associate Professor in 1923 and to Professor in 1925. In 1927 Brogan again became Chairman and served until 1929. And from 1931 until 1939 he served as Chairman for the third time. Before the end of this term he had also assumed the title of Dean of the Graduate School, in which position he served actively for twenty-one years (1936-1957; from 1957-1959 he remained Dean while on leave). In a "History of the Department of Philosophy" the following remarks occur immediately following the statement that the first Ph.D. was awarded in philosophy in 1952:

Dean Brogan, perhaps more than any other man, was to be identified with the Philosophy Department in this era. A history of his work and achievement for the 50 years he was active at the University is virtually a history of the Department since 1914.

Between 1919 and 1933 Brogan published several articles in value theory in major philosophical journals that created something of a stir in the philosophical community. A 1919 article ("The Fundamental Value Universal," in The Journal of Philosophy) remains today a classical work in the logic of value terms. Around 1930 it became widely rumored that he was working on a book in value theory that would carry his constructive views forward. And he was indeed so engaged. Over the first years of the '30's he labored patiently over it. He could not be hurried. His work was perhaps encouraged by an appointment as Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago in 1930-1931, but on returning to Texas he

again assumed the Chairmanship of the Department and in 1932 he agreed to serve as Assistant Dean of the Graduate School. There is no doubt that these duties slowed his writing significantly. Also in that year he served as President of the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association and delivered a presidential address entitled "Philosophy and the Problem of Value" at its annual meeting at Ann Arbor, Michigan. By 1936 the long-awaited book was nearing completion. But that was the year he became Dean of the Graduate School, and further work on the book was put aside for a while, then for a longer while, and then finally for good. (An extensive draft of some of this book, as well as other unpublished material, is now in the possession of the Baylor University Library.) Professor David L. Miller, Brogan's younger colleague during this period, reports that Brogan came to think that his book would no longer be of great interest to philosophers. Professor E. T. Mitchell, another of Brogan's colleagues in philosophy, could not agree with this, and in 1950 he published a book of his own (A System of Ethics, Scribners) which, strongly influenced by Brogan's ideas, had a significant influence in this country. In the Preface to his book Mitchell makes the following remarks:

I wish ... to make special acknowledgment of what I owe to Professor Brogan, with whom I have worked for many years. One of my major disappointments is that since being drafted for Dean of the Graduate School he has not had time to publish his own textbook embodying his contributions to ethical theory and his methods of teaching the subject. I also urged him to collaborate with me in the writing of this textbook, but he lacked time for this project too. With his assent I have based the main parts of my chapters on theory of the right and the good on his published articles.

(It is unclear whether the "textbook" by Brogan referred to is the same as the work on value theory. In any case the latter was not a "textbook" in any ordinary sense of the term. It was a treatise of the most

advanced sort.) In a later footnote to a passage in which some of Brogan's views are presented, Mitchell makes the comment that

... this definition, to the best of my knowledge, has never been published, but it appears in mimeographed material distributed to his students ...

We get a glimpse from these remarks of the tremendous shift in priorities which took place in Brogan's life when he assumed a role of administrative leadership in the University. A great deal was lost; his great promise as a leader in American philosophical thought was never quite fulfilled. But those who, like Brogan, have loved The University of Texas and who have conceived of its role in our society as an important one cannot help thinking that a great deal was also gained. Indeed, the record of Brogan's achievements in guiding the development of the Graduate School, and more broadly, in the general development of the University is more than just impressive; it is monumental.

Brogan's initial fifteen years as Dean of the Graduate School spanned a period of economic, international, and cultural stress and change that was not always favorable to the development of graduate education in the United States. Dean Brogan confronted this period as a challenge. It was his aim to provide a foundation of excellence upon which, given more favorable times, one could build with confidence. His success was such that in the last six or seven years of his tenure as Dean he was able to enjoy the fruits of his good management and to guide the development of graduate education at The University of Texas to a new level of achievement.

The scope of his vision was defined early in a Report of the Dean of the Graduate School, 1937-1939 Biennium:

... The function of a graduate school is training for the advancement of knowledge. In undergraduate colleges and in such professional schools as law or engineering, the primary function is the training of students in existing knowledge and practice. A graduate school may need to continue, at a higher level, this transmission of what is already known, but its primary function concerns the advancement of knowledge and the training of those persons who can advance knowledge.

... Although we may justly be proud of the rank of the University in relation to other southern universities, the position of the University in relation to the best universities in the nation does not present so pleasing a picture ... it is not among the twenty leading universities in this nation. Neither in Texas nor anywhere in the South is there a graduate school which has a large number of departments offering distinguished work for the doctor's degree. Every one of the leading graduate schools of the United States may be found either in California or in the north-eastern section of this country that includes Minnesota, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and other states north and east of those states. In the entire central area of the South our Graduate School is the only one that may be included among the leading 30 institutions; our task is to raise it at least to the top 12.

Later that year in a press release to the University of Texas News Service Dean Brogan indicated some of the steps which he felt were necessary to the realization of these goals. They included the careful development of an excellent graduate faculty, the provision of a work load for such faculty that would allow its members to devote more time to graduate teaching, an increase in funding for fellowships and other financial aid for graduate students, stronger courses in graduate study, improvements in the selection of graduate students, establishment of a

University Press, and integration and improvement of research funding and facilities. In spite of the dislocations of World War II, during which enrollment in graduate work plummeted across the nation, Brogan continued doggedly to pursue these strategies by whatever means available. The upshot was that, when the rapid expansion of graduate education took place in the United States after the war, The University of Texas found itself in a favorable position for further growth and the enhancement of its reputation as a graduate institution. By 1951 enrollment in the Graduate School at Austin had already become the highest in the South. By 1957, the final active year of Brogan's Deanship, graduate enrollment had risen to 2,422 (from 580 in 1936 when Brogan became Dean), the number of doctoral-level programs stood at 39 (from 23 in 1936), and the number of doctoral-level degrees conferred was 133 (from 21 in 1936), which served to rank the University as fourteenth in the nation in number of such degrees conferred. (For an extended discussion of Brogan's tenure as Dean, one may consult the M. A. thesis, Dimensions of a Prominent American Graduate School, The Graduate School of The University of Texas in Austin, 1883-1969, by Thomas Herndon Wolfe, The University of Texas at Austin, May, 1970, pp. 131-175.)

In addition to these large-scale achievements under Brogan's leadership, many other achievements and honors deserve mention. Only a sampling of these can be indicated here. In 1937 he instituted an advisory Graduate Council. In 1938 he was elected president of the University Club. In 1939 the University Research Institute was funded and began operation. In the late '30's Brogan helped plan for the retirement program at the University and was instrumental in the development of the modified-service plan for faculty members over 70. In 1947 he served as President of the Conference of Deans of Southern Graduate Schools. He was elected in 1948 to the presidency of the Texas Philosophical Society, an organization that had included many of the leaders of Texas government, education, and business -- from Houston and Lamar to the present. After much encouragement on his part, the

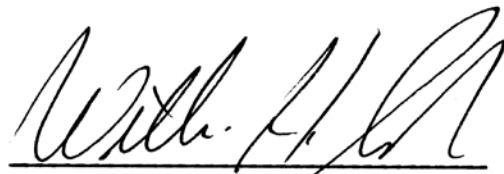
Development Board was created by the Board of Regents, and he became its first Secretary in 1954. And in the early '50's the Graduate School led the University as a whole in becoming racially integrated.

Two further observations regarding Brogan's unique contribution to The University of Texas during his Deanship require mention. The first concerns the high quality of his appointments for the administration of graduate affairs in the University. His appointment of a succession of gifted Associate and Assistant Deans ensured the continuation of his ideals of excellence beyond his own tenure as Dean. They included Harry Hunt Ransom, who eventually served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Vice-President and Provost, and Chancellor of The University of Texas System, W. Gordon Whaley, who succeeded Brogan as Graduate Dean and served until 1972, and William S. Livingston, who served as Vice-Chancellor for Academic Programs for The University of Texas System and presently (1984) serves as Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies. His care in the appointment of graduate advisors in the various graduate programs in the University also had its long-range benefits. Samuel Ellison, Professor Emeritus of Geology and former Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, makes the following remarks:

Among his great achievements were the appointments of effective, dedicated graduate advisors, especially in the various science departments. The present high ranking departments of Botany, Zoology, Chemistry, Physics, and Geological Sciences directly reflect the excellence of the graduate advisors appointed during Brogan's tenure as Graduate Dean. The use of graduate advisors to operate graduate research and training became mature during 1940 to 1960. The University owes much because of these appointments.

The second observation concerns Brogan's role in the preservation of continuity, stability, and ambition in the University as a whole during

Dean Brogan died during the year of the centennial celebration of the founding of The University of Texas. It is fitting that we were enabled to celebrate the distinguished lives of each at the same time.



William H. Cunningham, President

The University of Texas at Austin

BROGAN, Cleo Rice, of Austin, died Monday. Services 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Weed-Corley Funeral Home. Burial, Austin Memorial Park. Survivors: husband, Dean Albert Brogan of Austin; son, Francis Brogan of San Antonio; brother, James Rice of Austin; sisters, Mary Rice, Mrs. Stanley P. Finch, Elizabeth Rice Finks, all of Austin; two grandsons; two great-grandchildren.

Obituary of Cleo Brogan
Austin American-Statesman, February 11, 1982

HENRY W. and MITTIE HARRIS (ca. 1930 – ca. 1932)

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Henry W. and Mittie Harris at this address. Both were 52 years old. Henry had been born in Arkansas; Mittie had been born in Texas. With them lived two children, Ruth, 23, and Henry, 18. Henry W. Harris is listed as a collector for a dry goods store. Ruth was a saleslady in a dry goods store, and Henry, Jr. was in school. The 1940 U.S. Census shows that Henry and Mittie had moved to Freestone County, Texas, where they operated a gas station and grocery store.

MARCELLE HAMER (ca. 1933 – ca. 1941)

Marcelle Hamer appears in the 1940 U.S. Census report at this address, with an indication that she rented the house for \$35 a month. She was then 39, and lived with her daughter Mary, 9. She listed her occupation as a librarian in the state university library.

HAMER, ELIZABETH MARCELLE LIVELY (1900–1974). Marcelle Lively Hamer, librarian and Texas folklorist, was born on July 14, 1900, in Whitewright, Texas, to Robert Morris and Clara Susan (Lemmon) Lively. Her father was a banker and general merchant in Whitewright, and her mother taught English at Grayson College in Whitewright before marrying. Marcelle attended school in Whitewright, spent a primary year at Kidd-Key College in Sherman, then completed her secondary education at Southeastern State Normal in Durant, Oklahoma. She received a two-year degree from Christian College, Columbia, Missouri, in 1919; she was president of the student body and a member of Phi Theta Kappa. She received a B.A. in English in 1921 at the University of Oklahoma, where she belonged to Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, an organization with which she maintained a lifelong association. In 1939 she received her M.A. in English at the University of Texas. After a year of elementary school teaching in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, she married Robert Coit Hamer, a cotton buyer of Renner, Texas, on October 1, 1922, in Durant, Oklahoma. They lived in Itasca and Austin, Texas, and Muskogee, Oklahoma, but their principal residence was in Dallas, where she belonged to the College Club and Kappa Kappa Gamma alumnae. She also volunteered at the well-baby clinic that later became Freeman Hospital. The Hamers had a daughter; their marriage ended in divorce in 1930.

From September 1932 until 1955 Marcelle Hamer was head of the Texas Collection^{qv} at the University of Texas library. From 1955 until 1965 she was librarian of the Southwest Room of the El Paso Public Library, and after retirement she worked briefly at the Mary Couets Burnett Library^{qv} of Texas Christian University. In addition to her work as librarian, Mrs. Hamer was also treasurer of the [Texas Folklore Society](#) from 1934 until 1951. The position included working with editors of the society, including J. Frank Dobie, Harry Hunt Ransom, and [Mody Boatright](#). She also worked with publishers, answered correspondence, and posted the annual society publications. Among her other writings, she compiled and wrote the first publication on the state [Governor's Mansion](#), at the request of Joe Betsy Allred, wife of Governor [James Allred](#). She wrote a chapter for the 1939 Texas Folklore Society publication *In the Shadow of History*. Her contributions to the [Southwestern Historical Quarterly](#) included an article entitled "Huntsville Centennial of Statehood Celebration" (1947). For the *Frontier Times* she wrote an article on Texas politics (1944). To the *Library Chronicle of the University of Texas* (1950) she contributed an article on the growth of the Texas Collection at UT.

During her years in Austin Hamer was an active member of the Texas Folklore Society, the [Texas State Historical Association](#), and the Christian Church. In El Paso and Fort Worth she also belonged to the Westerners Corral. After retirement from the El Paso Public Library in 1965, she moved to Fort Worth, where she lived until her death, on March 4, 1974. She was buried in Oakhill Cemetery, Whitewright.

From the [Handbook of Texas](#)

MRS. NELLIE BERKMAN (ca. 1941 – ca. 1946)

ALFRED BERKMAN

Funeral services for Alfred Berkman, 89, will be held Thursday morning at the Gethsemane Lutheran church at 10 a. m. with the Rev. J. E. Chester officiating. Burial will be in Oakwood cemetery.

Pallbearers, who are all nephews, will be Luther Berkman, Walter Berkman, Martin Berkman, Raymond Peterson, Alfred Oman and Charlie Berkman.

Mr. Berkman is survived by his widow, Mrs. Nellie Berkman; two daughters, Mrs. Bernice Burke and Miss Ingrid Joyce Berkman, both of Austin; four sons, C. E. Berkman, A. Bert Berkman, John L. Berkman, all of Austin, and Vincent Berkman of Columbia, Missouri; one brother, Gus Berkman of Round Rock, and two sisters, Mrs. Hannah Anderson and Mrs. Hulda Oman of Georgetown.

Mr. Berkman was born in Nango Smoland, Sweden, June 7, 1848 and came to the United States in 1866, settling in the Govalle community where he lived until 1911. He then moved to Bishop and Corpus Christi, where he made his home until 1917 when he retired from farming and returned to Austin.

Obituary of Alfred Berkman, the husband of Nellie Berkman, who died before she moved into this house.

Austin American, June 2, 1938

MRS. ALFRED BERKMAN

Mrs. Alfred (Nellie P.) Berkman, 95, of 3414 Spanish Oak Dr., died in a local hospital Friday. Mrs. Berkman was a resident of Austin for 80 years, coming here from Gothenberg, Sweden. She was a lifetime member of Gethsemane Lutheran Church and a longtime member of the choir.

Survivors are three sons, C. E. Berkman, J. Leonard Berkman and A. Bertil Berkman, all of Austin; two daughters, Mrs. Ernest S. (Bernice) Burks of Lake Travis and Mrs. James A. (Ingrid) Warren Jr. of Austin, 10 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Funeral will be 3 p.m. Sunday at Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Rev. Karl Gronberg officiating. Burial, under the direction of the Weed-Corley Funeral Home, will be at Oakwood Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Gethsemane Lutheran Church.

JOHN, MAZIE, and ELOISE BIRGE (ca. 1956 – ca. 1977)

Jack and Mazie Birge appear in the 1930 U.S. Census of El Paso, Texas, where they lived in a rented house. Jack Birge was then 37, had been born in Texas, and worked in commercial advertising. Mazie Birge was then 29 and had been born in Texas. She had no occupation listed. Their daughter, Eloise, was 8. A 1930 Pueblo, Colorado newspaper article on the death of David S. Reed mentions that he was the father of Mrs. Mazie Birge, who was living in Los Angeles at the time of her father's death in June, 1930. Her father lived in Southern Colorado.

JOHN (JACK) S. BIRGE
 John (Jack) S. Birge of 2822 Rio Grande died suddenly Thursday afternoon. He had been a resident of Austin since 1933, and a veteran of World War I.
 He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Mazie D. Birge, and one daughter, Miss Eloise Birge of Austin.
 Funeral services will be held Saturday in the Cook Funeral Home Chapel at 10 a.m. with burial following in the Austin Memorial Park.

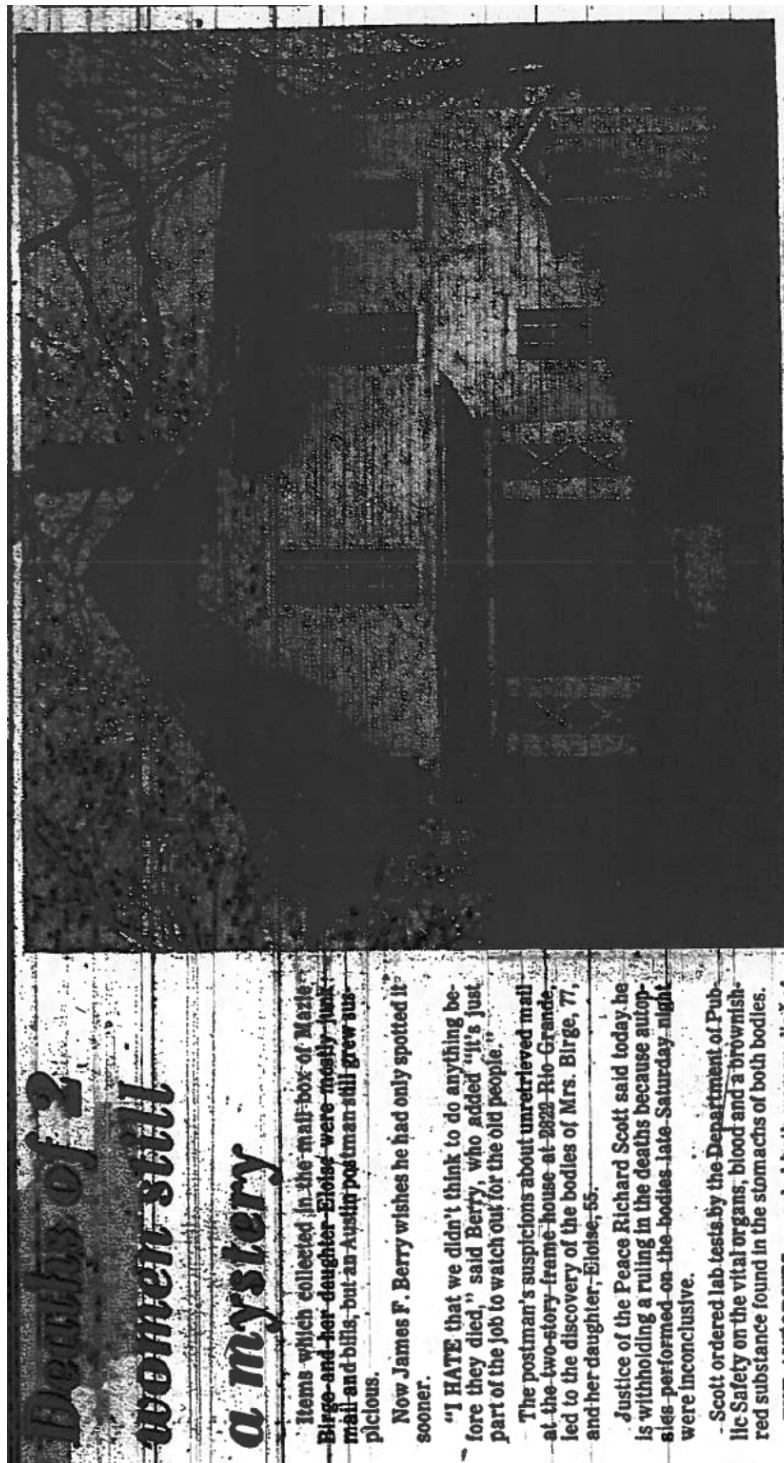
Obituary of Jack Birge, the husband of Mazie Birge and the father of Eloise Birge
 Austin American, June 13, 1958

BIRGE, Mrs. Mazie, 77, 2822 Rio Grande, died Thursday. Graveside services 11 a.m. Tuesday at Austin Memorial Park. Survivor: niece, Mrs. Mazie Crawford of San Antonio. (Cook-Walden)

BIRGE, Miss Eloise, 55, of 2822 Rio Grande, died Thursday. Graveside services 11 a.m. Tuesday at Austin Memorial Park. Survivor: niece, Mazie Crawford of San Antonio. (Cook-Walden)

HARRIS, Julian C., 70, 2805 Robinson Avenue

Obituaries of Mazie and Eloise Birge
 Austin American-Statesman, January 24, 1977



Staff Photo by Kit Brooking

DEATH SCENE FOR AUSTIN MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

Neighbors and postman noticed stacked up newspapers and letters

ed a room in the house. The student contacted a neighbor, who who looked in a window but couldn't see anything unusual, police said.

The concern of neighbors continued to grow, however, and police were called about 6 p.m. Saturday. Officers found the women dead on the floor of the apartment, Scott said. The daughter was in the dining room, he said, and the mother was lying just a few feet away in the adjoining bedroom.

Scott said both women were fully clothed and it appeared they had eaten shortly before their deaths. Dirty dishes were still on the dining room table, he said.

POLICE SAID they did not suspect foul play.

Mrs. R. T. Davis, a neighbor who lives at 2318 Rio Grande, described the Birge's as "very private," but wonderful neighbors.

Davis said she became suspicious of several unretrieved copies of *The Austin American-Statesman* that remained on the front porch of the Birge's residence.

"Mrs. Birge was a staunch Democrat and an avid reader," Davis said. "I couldn't believe she wouldn't be reading those papers since she was very interested in current affairs (like President Carter's inauguration)."

"IT WAS HARD for people to look in on them," Davis said, noting that Mrs. Birge was a very independent person who "lived only for her daughter."

Deaths of 2 women still a mystery

Items which collected in the mail box of Mazie Birge and her daughter Eloise were mostly junk mail and bills, but an Austin postman still grew suspicious.

Now James F. Berry wishes he had only spotted it sooner.

"I HATE that we didn't think to do anything before they died," said Berry, who added "it's just part of the job to watch out for the old people."

The postman's suspicions about unretrieved mail at the two-story frame house at 2322 Rio Grande led to the discovery of the bodies of Mrs. Birge, 77, and her daughter, Eloise, 55.

Justice of the Peace Richard Scott said today he is withholding a ruling in the deaths because autopsies performed on the bodies late Saturday night were inconclusive.

Scott ordered lab tests by the Department of Public Safety on the vital organs, blood and a brownish-red substance found in the stomachs of both bodies.

THE AUTOPSIES revealed both women died of heart failure sometime Thursday, Scott said. He was unsure, however, what caused the heart failures.

Rulings in the deaths were withheld pending completion of the lab tests.

The women's lives were mysterious and private, according to neighbors and the postman, who said he never saw the daughter.

The women didn't receive any Christmas cards last year and but a few personal letters over the past five years, said Berry, who missed work Tuesday and Wednesday last week with a injured finger.

The substitute route man couldn't have known something was amiss, said Berry, who noticed some mail in the box Thursday, the day the women died.

BY SATURDAY, he knew something was wrong, and discussed the situation with a student who rented

News story on the deaths of Mazie and Eloise Birge
Austin American-Statesman, January 24, 1977