



NEILL-COCHRAN HOUSE MUSEUM

A Century of Austin History: 1855-1958

2310 San Gabriel Street | Austin, Texas 78705

www.nchmuseum.org | (512) 478-2335 | info@nchmuseum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: October 25, 2015

CONTACT: A.P. Perry

TIME: 2:00PM-4:00PM

aperry@nchmuseum.org

Neill-Cochran House Museum's Modern Times Series presents

Texas Centennial Exposition and Fair Park: A Lecture by Jim Parsons and David Bush

What cures depression? In the case of 1930's Texas, the answer is simple: modern opulence. The Texas Centennial Exposition's Pavillions at Fair Park in Dallas are a window into a radically ambitious project to spark economic growth during the height of the Great Depression.

Writing in 2011 for the Houston Chronicle, Bush and Parsons spoke to the sheer spectacle of the exposition. "In a state where half of the residents lived on farms or in towns of less than 2,500 people, the Centennial Exposition was as different from every-day life as the Emerald City was from sepia-toned Kansas."

In retrospect, the president of the Texas Centennial Commission's usage of the portmanteau of Texan and Titanic ("Texanic") is entirely just. After Houston, in many respects the natural venue for this Texas edition of the World's Fair, showed little appetite for footing the multi-million dollar costs of hosting the Centennial, it was the approval of a \$3 million dollar bond and the widespread support of the business community in Dallas that secured the future of Fair Park. Ultimately, architect George L. Dahl and his vision of classically-influenced and dignified glamour would employ some 15,000 workers and incur a cost of \$25 million dollars to construct.

Notably among World's Fair sites, some 60% of the original architecture has been preserved, thanks in no small part to the 1986 founding of the Friends of Fair Park. Touching on design, cultural heritage, and preservation, this one window on the Texanic amidst economic and social turmoil strikes an important contrast between the realities and the aspirations of the depression era in the Texas of that time.

Mr. Parsons and Mr. Bush, director of special projects and executive director, respectively of Preservation Houston, co-authored Fair Park Deco, published in 2012 by Texas Christian University press.

Admission is \$10 to the general public, \$5 to students with valid ID, and free to members of the Friends of the Neill-Cochran House Museum. Complimentary refreshments provided. Doors open at 2:00; presentation begins at 2:30. Parking is available free to patrons in the museum lot located off of 23rd street between San Gabriel and Leon.

For more information or for tickets, visit <http://www.nchmuseum.org/october-25-texas-centennial-exposition-and-fair-park/>

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