

**FINDING AID FOR THE
TIMBER COVE RECREATION ASSOCIATION RECORDS,
1962-2006 (#2011-0010)**

[Clear Lake Area Collection]

Collection Number: 2011-0010

Title: Timber Cove Recreation Association Records

Dates: 1962-2006

Creator: Timber Cove Recreation Association

Abstract

The Timber Cove Recreation Association Records is composed of correspondence, organization meeting minutes, annual reports, membership records, financial records, construction records, and miscellaneous records, documenting the operation of the Timber Cove Civic Club and its successor Timber Cove Recreation Association in supporting the Timber Cove neighborhood of Taylor Lake Village, Texas. Timber Cove is known for the high number of NASA Johnson Space Center personnel and astronauts' families who resided and continue to reside in the neighborhood, beginning in 1961 with the selection of the new site for the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas. The bulk of the collection is composed of the organizational records for the Timber Cove Recreation Association, such as their annual reports and correspondence to members. There are the board meeting minutes from 1965 to 2006 (with gaps in dates).

Extent: 1.5 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository

University of Houston-Clear Lake Archives and Special Collections, Alfred R. Neumann Library, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Houston, TX 77058-1002

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing this collection.

Restrictions on Use

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Preferred Citation

[Item name or title], [Box Numbers], [Folder Numbers], Timber Cove Recreation Association Records, 2011-0010, University of Houston-Clear Lake Archives and Special Collections, Alfred R. Neumann Library, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Houston, TX 77058-1002

Acquisition

The collection was donated to the University of Houston-Clear Lake Archives and Special Collections by Victor Scott, Timber Cove Recreation Association president, in November 2008. Timber Cove Recreation Association retained copies of important materials for their records.

Separated Material

Signed board of director election ballots, lifeguard applications with personal information, and pool incident reports were returned to the Timber Cove Recreation Association, due to the privacy nature of the materials.

Related Material

Timber Cove Collection, 2011-0008, University of Houston-Clear Lake Archives and Special Collections, Alfred R. Neumann Library, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Houston, TX 77058-1002

Timber Cove Garden Club Records, 2011-0009, University of Houston-Clear Lake Archives and Special Collections, Alfred R. Neumann Library, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Houston, TX 77058-1002

Processed by: Shelly Kelly, 2011; finding aid updated by Matthew M. Peek, August 2022.

Arrangement

The original donation arrived filed in chronological order by calendar year, with additional subject folders. The original order was rearranged into series based on purpose of the materials for the ease of locating specific information. These series are as follows: Organizational Files; Minutes; Financial Records; Swimming Pool Records; and Subject Files.

Historical Note

The Timber Cove neighborhood was developed in February 1958 on farmland previously owned by the Ballentine family in an area near the modern city of Seabrook, Texas. The neighborhood's developers had conceived the Taylor Lake Village neighborhood as a lakeside getaway. Frank Marsters was one of the first home builders in the Timber Cove development. According to an oral history interview with Frank Marsters III, the original concept for the neighborhood was to be a weekend home for busy Houston, Texas, executives who wanted a lake house that was closer than the island of Galveston.

By 1961, the only lots in Timber Cove that had homes were at the ends of the development, which were nearest the water of Taylor Lake to serve as true “waterfront homes.” The middle part of the development was all empty of constructed properties, as interest in the development had died down and housing sales had dropped off. One of the neighborhood developers was the Taylor Lake Development Company, whose president was William S. Crawford Jr. as of 1961. In 1961, the village of El Lago and Timber Cove neighborhood were incorporated as Taylor Lake Village, Texas. Seabrook was incorporated as a municipality in 1961. September Hurricane Carla hit the southeast Texas coast in September 1961, which further pulled interest away from individuals purchasing property and building homes in the Timber Cove neighborhood.

When NASA announced the construction of the Manned Spacecraft Center in coastal Harris County, Texas, many of the mostly male scientists and engineers came down from their headquarters at Langley Research Center in Virginia, exploring the area to locate either A) a residence to rent or purchase, or B) property to purchase for the construction of a new home. Many began locating the neighborhood situated in a large stand of woods near the coast of Taylor Lake, and felt the area was perfect. Word of mouth spread among astronauts and other NASA personnel’s families, who began purchasing lots and homes in the new Timber Cove neighborhood.

The NASA Manned Spacecraft Center began construction in April 1962. The mass movement of federal personnel into coastal Houston, Texas, created a housing boom in the area that was largely due to the complete absence of sufficient housing in the Bay Area prior to the 1960s. Prior to this time, the region was largely a rural area supporting ranching and fishing industries. The housing boom driven by the Timber Cove Development led Humble Oil Company to establish its real estate and development subsidiary Friendswood Development Company in 1962. The Company created the Houston area’s very first master-planned community of Clear Lake City, which by 1964 became home to a great number of NASA personnel as NASA’s Apollo Program developed through the late 1960s.

In 1962, the Timber Cove Civic Club formed an independent committee to investigate the feasibility of constructing a swimming pool and recreation area. After an initial survey of residents found over seventy percent favored the project, they held a charter membership drive to raise funds. Charter members paid a \$50 initiation fee, \$135 charter membership share, and \$65 annual dues. Membership surpassed the required minimum quota of 80 initial members by March 1963.

As a result of the swimming pool fundraising, the Timber Cove Recreation Association (TCRA) would be incorporated on April 10, 1963, as a non-profit corporation. Their mission was to promote the public health and interests of the Timber Cove residents, by owning and operating a swimming pool and club house for its members. Taylor Lake Development Company deeded the land to the Timber Cove Recreation Association for \$10 on April 22, 1963. TCRA contracted Abernathy Company to construct the swimming pool in May 1963, and the builder Traditional Homes built the pool’s club house. The swimming pool was purposefully designed to resemble the shape of the Project Mercury capsule, in honor Timber Cove resident Colonel John Glenn, the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth. The pool opened on June 22, 1963, with Opening Day celebrations held on the Fourth of July 1963.

The Timber Cove community developed into a close family-oriented neighborhood. The neighborhood became known for the high number of Gemini, Mercury, and Apollo astronauts living in the neighborhood. Gus Grissom and Wally Schirra were next-door neighbors on Pine Shadows, and Jim Lovell lived one street over on Lazywood Lane. Sleepy Hollow Court was home to Scott Carpenter, Pete Conrad and John Glenn.

According to a 2016 *Houston Chronicle* newspaper article, Timber Cove “neighbors did what they could to protect the astronauts' families. They couldn't help much during missions. Before a launch, the national media built huge transmission towers and erected TV camera platforms in the astronaut families' front yards [in Timber Cove]. Crowds of newsmen gathered in the front yards, and photographers shot paparazzi-style over the back fences. But the neighbors could, at least, protect the astronaut families' privacy on other days—those days when cars drove slowly through the neighborhood, and sightseeing buses cruised the streets, everyone hoping to wave to an astronaut in his own front yard. When reporters and sightseers would ask neighbors for directions to an astronaut's house, the neighbors engaged in what one resident calls “creative misdirection.”

As of 2022, the Timber Cove neighborhood is composed of 241 single family properties, with a median size of the homes being 2,530 square feet. The Timber Cove Neighborhood Association still is in operation today under the legal name “Timber Cove Civic Club, Inc.”

[Information on the history of Timber Cove neighborhood and NASA astronauts was taken directly from the article Lisa Gray, “John Glenn's neighborhood: In Timber Cove, the astronauts' families protected their own,” December 8, 2016, *Houston Chronicle*, viewed online at <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/John-Glenn-s-neighborhood-10784236.php>]

Scope and Content

The collection is composed of correspondence, organization meeting minutes, annual reports, membership records, financial records, construction records, and miscellaneous records, documenting the operation of the Timber Cove Civic Club and its successor Timber Cove Recreation Association in supporting the Timber Cove neighborhood of Taylor Lake Village, Texas. Timber Cove is known for the high number of NASA Johnson Space Center personnel and astronauts' families who resided and continue to reside in the neighborhood, beginning in 1961 with the selection of the new site for the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas.

The bulk of the collection is composed of the organizational records for the Timber Cove Recreation Association, such as their annual reports and correspondence to members. There are the board meeting minutes from 1965 to 2006 (with gaps in dates). Some of the more unique materials are the records for the design, creation, and construction of the famous Mercury capsule-shaped neighborhood swimming pool that opened in the summer of 1963. The pool continues to be one of the distinguishing features of the neighborhood, marking its place as the home to Mercury astronauts.

Subject Terms

Personal/Family Name

Garrison, Arthur E.
Crawford, William S. Jr.
Isles, Roy
Markley, O. W.
Roze, Janet

Corporate Names

Abernathy Company
Taylor Lake Development Company
Timber Cove Recreation Association

Geographic Name

Houston (Tex.)
Seabrook (Tex.)

Topical Term

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center--Officials and employees--Biography
Manned Spacecraft Center (U.S.)
Manned space flight--United States--History
Seabrook (Tex.)--Social life and customs

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Financial records
Minutes
Newsletters
Reports

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
		Organizational Files	
1	1	By-Laws—Timber Cove Recreation Association, Inc	1963, 1975
	2	Certificate and Articles of Incorporation of Timber Cove Recreation Association, Inc.	April 1963
	3	Deed Taylor Lake Development Co. to Timber Cove Recreation Association, Inc.	April 22, 1963
	4	Swimming Pool Contract and Building Permit	May-April 1963
	5	Introductory Notice to Residents	1963
	6	Board of Directors Report (2nd floor addition)	January 1966
	7	Release of Franchise Tax Lien	March 3, 1967
	8	Official Boundary Map and Assessors Map of the City of Taylor Lake Village	1978
	9	Lake Country Estates Access to Pool	1981-1982
	10	Annual Reports	1964, 1969, 1984, 1989, 1991
	11	Correspondence to Members	1965, 1983, 1995, 1997, 2001-2002
	12	Correspondence from Members	1994
	13	Membership	1963, 1966, 1968-1970, 1982-1983, 1992-1994, 1997, 2001-2002
	14	Maintenance Requests	1983
	15	Newsletter	1964-1969
	16	Oil, Gas, and Mineral Lease	1996
	17	Emergency Plan	2006
		Minutes	
	18	Minutes	1965-1966
	19	Minutes	1967-1968
	20	Minutes	1969-1970
	21	Minutes	1971-1973
	22	Minutes	1974-1980
	23	Minutes	1981-1983, 1985
	24	Minutes	1992-1994
2	1	Minutes	1995-1996, 1998
	2	Minutes	2001-2003, 2006
		Financial Records	
	3	Taxes	1964-1969, 1977
	4	Proposed Budget Review	1965

	5		Finances	1965, 1967
	6		Financial Records	1969-1970
	7-9		Account Books	1968-1970
	10		Treasurer's Reports	1992-1997, 2001-2002
	11		Asset Age and Replacement Cost Analysis	2000
	12		Receipts – Opening Day	1965
	13		Receipts – Facilities Renovation	1969
	14		Receipt – Roofing	1981
			Swimming Pool	
	15		Request for Bid	March 17, 1963
	16		Rules and Regulations	1964-1965
	17		Maintenance and Operating Instructions	1983
	18		Maintenance	1992, 1994
3	1		Agreement for Use	1986, 1997
	2		Management Proposals	1993-1994
	3		Pool Chemistry	Undated
	4		Troubleshooting	circa 1981
	5		Triton Sand Filters (Installation, Operation, & Service Manual)	1983
	6		MSDS: Material Safety Data Sheet	1991
	7		Chemical Usage (includes receipts)	1994-1997
	8		Pump	1998
			Subject Files	
	9		Annual Information Packet	1991-1994
	10		Annual Information Packet	2000-2006
	11		Bulkhead Repair Proposals	1993, 1995-1996
	12		Ice Machine	1998
	13		Pest Control	1998
	14		Spring Work Day	2001
			Plaque	
	15		Dolphins Swim Team Plaque	1994