

# MANSION: Museum is a temporary home

Continued from D1

The restoration immediately became a rescue operation. It is not expected to be finished until 2012 at the earliest. (The Perrys continue to live in a \$9,000-a-month house in Southwest Austin.)

Now, the state has found a way to hold an open house for the mansion in absentia.

The Bullock Texas State History Museum has unveiled a summer exhibit about the people's house: "Texas Treasure: Inside Our Governor's Mansion." The exhibit runs through Aug. 1.

## Not in my front yard

Even in the 1800s, people worried about their property values. Joseph Harrell lived opposite the site of the construction project for the mansion. Abner Cook, the highly acclaimed builder of the mansion, placed the mansion's privy directly across from Harrell's front door. Harrell was livid. Cook moved the outhouse to a new location but sent Harrell a \$125 bill. On Sept. 2, 1856, Harrell petitioned the Legislature for redress. He won and got his money back.

## Food, glorious food

The kitchen of the Governor's Mansion has turned out some famous spreads. The high-profile guest list over the years includes President William McKinley and Queen Elizabeth. In 1901, First Lady Orlene 'Lena' Sayers, wife of Gov. Joseph Sayers, hosted an elegant dinner for McKinley, the first president to visit the mansion. After the meal, McKinley requested the recipe for Sayers' Sunshine Cake. The staff at the White House served the dessert for years.

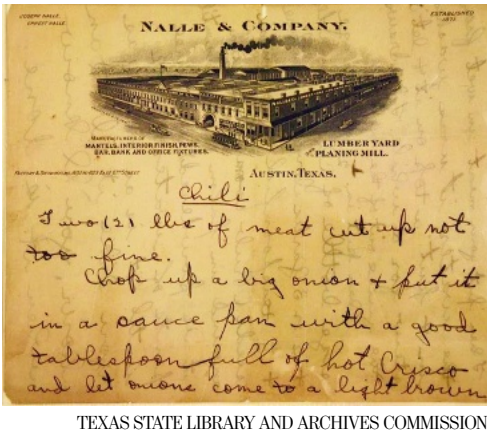
Renowned Oklahoma humorist Will Rogers was a frequent visitor of Gov. Miriam 'Ma' Ferguson, the first female governor of Texas and the second female governor in U.S. history. She served from 1925-27 and again from 1933-1935. Rogers was partial to Ferguson's chili. At one meal, he ate three bowls and then declined dessert so he could eat a fourth.

### Gov. Miriam 'Ma' Ferguson's Chili

4 pounds coarsely ground beef  
1 large onion, chopped  
2 cloves of garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon cumin seed  
6 teaspoons chili powder  
2 cans tomatoes (do not drain)  
Salt to taste  
2 cups hot water

Combine meat, onions and garlic in a large skillet. Sear until light colored. Add comino, chili powder, tomatoes, salt and hot water. Bring to a boil, lower heat, and simmer about one hour. Skim off fat as it cooks out to avoid greasy taste.

— Texas State Preservation Board



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### First Lady Orlene 'Lena' Sayers' Sunshine Cake

1 teaspoon cream of tartar  
1 cup unsifted flour  
Whites of 11 eggs  
Yolks of 3 eggs  
1½ cups sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Put cream of tartar into the flour and sift. Beat egg whites to a very stiff froth; beat yolks well and add them to the whites. Add sugar carefully, then the flavoring, and last the flour.

Mix thoroughly, but lightly and quickly; turn into a 9-inch square ungreased pan and bake in a 350-degree oven for 45 minutes.

— Texas State Preservation Board

Sam Houston wore a vest of jaguar skin in the 1840s and '50s.

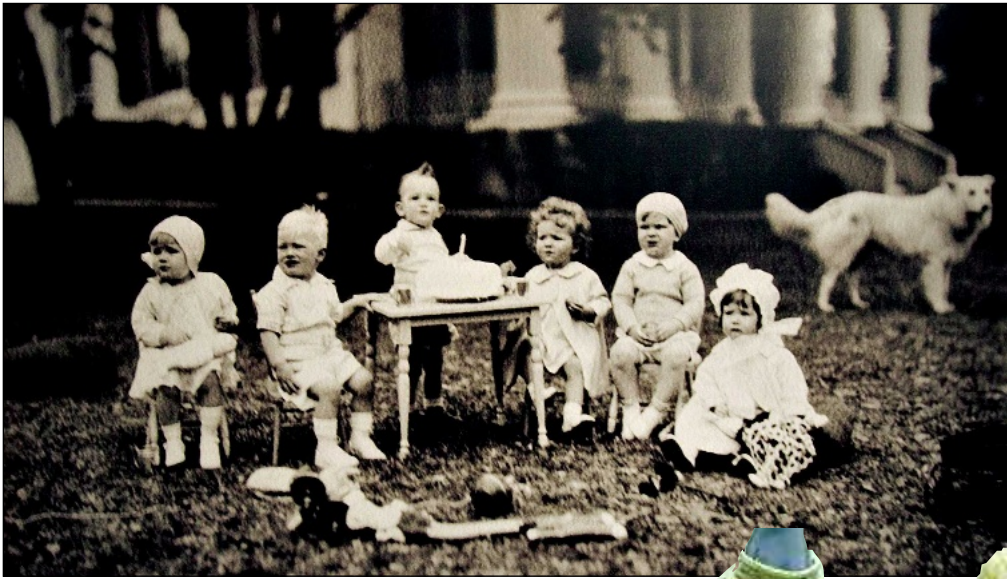
SAM HOUSTON MEMORIAL MUSEUM

## Now I lay me down to sleep

The White House has the Lincoln Bedroom. The Governor's Mansion has the Sam Houston Bedroom. Abe Lincoln probably never slept in the famous bed in Washington, but the tall man who served both as president of the Republic of Texas and governor of Texas definitely slept in the majestic mahogany bed in the mansion. He had it made to his specifications and the state paid \$30 for it. The four-poster canopy bed, right, is one of the most famous objects associated with the mansion. Houston's wife, Margaret, gave birth there in 1860 to Temple Lea Houston, the first child born in the mansion. Almost 80 years after Houston got the bed, another governor's wife gave birth to a son in it: Sam Houston Allred was born on March 17, 1937, to Gov. James Allred and first lady Joe Betsy Allred. The Sam Houston Bedroom has become a showplace in the southeast corner of the mansion's second floor.



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For much of its history, the Governor's Mansion has been considered the people's house. A child's first birthday party on the lawn was captured in a photo on exhibit at the Bullock Museum.

## R.I.P.

During the Civil War, the nephew of Gov. Pendleton Murrah paid a visit to the mansion. No coffee beans were available, so he was served hot okra juice. A niece of the governor was also visiting. The niece and the nephew met, and the nephew proposed marriage. She rebuffed him. The heartbroken man went upstairs and shot himself in the north bedroom, marking the first death in the mansion.

The famed Library, sometimes called the Green Room, just inside and to the left of the mansion's grand entranceway, was turned into a hospital room for the wife of Gov. Coke Stevenson. Blanch Fay Stevenson, a talented artist, suffered from terminal cancer and had attended her husband's inauguration in a wheelchair. A half-bathroom was constructed behind the west wall. An elevator was also installed so she could sometimes make it upstairs to the private family quarters. She died Jan. 3, 1942.



Sallie Hogg, Texas' first lady in the 1890s, owned the dress at far left, on loan from the First Ladies Historic Costume Collection at Texas Woman's University.

Alice Colquitt wore the gown at left in about 1911, when she was first lady.

**Sources:** 'The Governor's Mansion of Texas: A Historic Tour' by Friends of the Governor's Mansion; 'Dining at the Governor's Mansion,' by Carl McQueary; Texas State Preservation Board; Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum.

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