

HISTORICAL

Fritz Heitmann: Hunter, Dentist, Hardware Baron, and Houston Leader

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Introduction

In 1991, Dr. E. W. "Danny" D'Anton gave us an excellent history of the University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston (UTDB) (1). He stated that Texas Dental College, which was to become the UTDB, had its beginning in 1905 and followed its course until the time of his writing. He mentioned the third site of the college, from 1915 into the 1920's, as occupied the second floor of the Heitmann Hardware building at the corner of Fannin Street and Franklin Avenue in downtown Houston (2). That was the first time I heard the name Heitmann. Almost 20 years later, I heard it again.



Baker



Brown

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Rev. Brown served in the US Navy as an Underwater Demolition Team platoon commander and practiced law in Houston for 25 years. He became an ordained Episcopal priest in 1996 and currently serves churches in the Texas Hill Country.

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Abstract

Frederick (Fritz) A. Heitmann was a Houston business and civic leader in the late 1800's and early 1900's. He succeeded his father in the family hardware business, was hugely successful, and was known for helping establish the Houston Ship Channel among other large projects. His great success obscured his earlier contribution to the frontier as a dentist in the gold fields of Colorado. His father insisted he learn a skill independent of fluctuations in the business world. He apprenticed himself to a dentist and used those abilities, along with others, to gain a large stake to build the business. Also, he had strong opinions, and liked to talk. He told his story to his grandson, and his grandson's buddy, the co-author of this article.

KEY WORDS:

History, frontier dentistry, Port of Houston Dental Branch, UTDB

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