

## **The Six Historic Wards of Houston**

Houston was originally established in 1836 by John Kirby Allen and Augustus Chapman Allen. To help govern the city, they separated it into political districts known as wards. Today, the ward system does not exist as a governing system but they are still considered cultural entities by locals and form the foundation of Houston's modern neighborhoods.

### The First Ward

Houston's First Ward was originally Houston's commercial center and the place where business was conducted. The First Ward was one of the city's original four wards and grew so populated that the northeastern section was separated into the Fifth Ward

Today, the First Ward can be found by heading northwest of the Downtown Houston area. It's positioned among some of the city's most popular destinations, with the Washington Avenue corridor on its southern border, downtown just across the highway on the east, and Houston Heights on its northern border.

### The Second Ward

The Second Ward is yet another of the city's original four wards and is located on the opposite side of downtown from the First Ward. It was originally home to a number of Hispanic communities who moved into the area after World War II. It also has one of the oldest churches in the entire city. The Second Ward also became the center of art deco architecture in the city.

Since its early days, the neighborhood has become increasingly diverse. Meanwhile, it has given rise to new neighborhoods built around it, such as East Downtown and Greater Eastwood.

### The Third Ward

Yet another of Houston's original four historic wards, the Third Ward may actually be Houston's most well-known. Originally constructed on the eastern edges of the city, in an area that is now considered part of Downtown Houston, it spread southeast as it grew over the years.

The ward became a hotbed of political activism over the years and gave rise to a number of political parties and community activism organizations during the Civil Rights period of the 1960s. It also became home to the oldest recording studio in the south, SugarHill Recording Studios and remains home to prominent colleges such as Texas Southern University and the University of Houston. New developments are changing the look and feel of the ward but community members have done their best to guarantee that Third Ward remains a home to its longtime residents.

### The Fourth Ward

The last of Houston's original four wards, the Fourth Ward developed west of Downtown Houston and south of the First Ward. Much of the Fourth Ward became part of what is today downtown and Neartown Houston.

Originally settled by freed slaves who established themselves along the shores of Buffalo Bayou, the area experienced incredible diversification and growth as new neighborhoods grew up around it, including highly popular Midtown and Montrose. Growing alongside the neighborhoods it helped give rise to, the Fourth Ward has seen significant growth in residential properties over the last few decades.

### The Fifth Ward

The Fifth Ward was created out of the growth of Houston. Originally a part of the city's First Ward, the Fifth Ward was formally added to the city in 1866 in the northeastern section of Houston, which placed it just north of Buffalo Bayou. The area saw a wave of new residents moving into the area after World War I. Much later, it saw another surge in the local population as residents from New Orleans moved into the area following Hurricane Katrina.

Today, the ward is still recognized as a neighborhood and remains positioned around commercial centers such as the downtown area as well as Port Houston.

### The Sixth Ward

In 1876, a portion of land was cut off from the Fourth Ward. From that land, the last of Houston's wards, the Sixth Ward, was created. Positioned in West Houston, the Sixth Ward remains home to the city's oldest existing intact neighborhood, known as the Old Sixth Ward. With downtown just east of it, the Washington Avenue corridor to the north, and both Montrose and Midtown not far from it, the Sixth Ward is one of the busiest parts of the city.

Today, more than a century after its foundation, the Sixth Ward continues to fight to preserve its history and the unique character of the area. Many buildings in the area remain on federal and local historic registries, and these historic properties remain a point of pride in the area.

02.20.2018 by JASON LUTHOR

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