

Brooks Street Reminds Us of Sugar Land's History

Brooks Street was built in the early 1900s as a main artery to and from downtown Sugar Land. Travelers used it to go to and from work at the sugar refinery, make purchases in company stores, or commute to school. From a narrow dirt road to a busy suburban concrete thoroughfare, it still serves a useful purpose by linking Highways 90-A and Texas 6.

The street is named after Captain William McCan Brooks, who moved with his wife and two daughters to Sugar Land in 1914.

He earned his title the hard way, and brought a strong resume to his new job as manager of Sugarland Industries tenant farming operations.

His career in law enforcement began at the Texas State Penitentiary in Huntsville, followed by several years managing prisoners at the Clemons Prison Farm in Brazoria County.

To say that Captain Brooks was a “hands on” manager would be an understatement. His typical work day began by strapping on a pearl-handled pistol, adding a shot gun for good measure, then mounting his horse for a one-mile ride to meet with farm foremen and make work assignments. He then returned home, swapped his horse for a Franklin sedan - at the time, one of only two cars in Sugar Land - and, with his trusty shotgun and an occasional bodyguard, made the rounds of his scattered tenant farming operations.

The job had its dangerous moments, justifying his firearms. His daughter, Margery Brooks Ashford, recalls at least two attempts on his life. In the

first one, her father arrived home one evening with birdshot pellets lodged in the back of his head. Described as only a "flesh wound", he had been the target of a "drive-by shooting" while making his daily rounds.

The second attempt occurred in the 1920s. Standing by the fireplace in his home as he entertained his daughters, he leaned forward at the moment a shot was fired, shattered a window, and missed hitting Capt. Brooks by inches. A near miss, but close enough to encourage the family to move from their rural home into town. His new address: Brooks Street.

Captain Brooks died in 1932.

Money Magazine and CNNmoney.com rank Sugar Land as one of America's Best Places to Live.
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