

Power / Steam Plant on Main Street on the Hill

Submitted by local historian Bruce Kelly

Within this yellow-brick building, boilers produced steam for sugar refining and for electricity to power the refinery as well as the town.

This steam and power plant was built sometime before 1919.

Imperial Sugar later built a new steam and power plant several yards to the west. Two large black smoke stacks across Oyster Creek mark its location. The steam from the new plant powered the refinery steam whistle, announcing shift changes for the refinery and fire alarms for the town and surrounding area.

From May of 1956 to September of 1967, the old vacated building became the local union hall.

Note a large cement dome on the ground to the right of the building. This was a sediment tank for the refinery and town water system. Sugar Land was known for its excellent water drawn from deep artesian wells.

Beginning in 1925, Luke Thompson, who managed the water system and headed the volunteer fire department, lived in the house on the left, just across Main Street Bridge .

Sugar Land was a great place to live and work, so few houses ever became vacant, and the waiting list for a better one was long. A vacant house, due to death or a move from town, began a complicated shift of families upgrading their domiciles. In an effort to control the chaos, the company

decided to put in place a policy hoping to curtail so many moves. The policy stated that if you stayed in your house, your rent would never increase unless you asked for some sort of improvement.

Mr. Thompson took advantage of this rule. His initial rent in 1925 was \$35.00 and never increased. Thirty-four years later, in 1959, he was paying even less – only \$33.00! At that point in time he bought the house from Imperial.

Article as seen in the Fort Bend Star

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