



AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER

OUR COMMUNITY'S COLLECTIVE MEMORY

9th and Guadalupe | (512) 974-7480 | P.O. Box 2287, Austin, TX 78768-2287
Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. | Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. | Sunday, 12 noon-6 p.m.
Thursday and Friday, closed

The Austin History Center is a division of the [Austin Public Library](#).

Dear Austin ASHRAE Members:

I hope you all know that we have our Austin Chapter's historical documents being maintained at the Austin History Center (AHC). The web link is: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/library/ahc/>

You can go into the AHC and ask to see the Index to Archives and Manuscripts Collections and look up the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers and find our index number of: **AR-1997.016**. We currently have 2,319 items and 3 linear feet of material.

As a research center, the AHC places primary emphasis on the informational value of materials collected. The Collections include:

1. Publications issued by the City of Austin, Travis County, or their departments.
2. Material containing information about some aspect of Austin and Travis County (A/TC), including its residents, geography, economics, government, natural and built environment, businesses, institutions, and organizations.
3. Some items relating to Texas history, as included for background sources, or because they contain significant information about A/TC, their residents, or because they illuminate Austin events.

Because aesthetic and historical value alone is of secondary importance in meeting informational needs, and due to consideration of space and conservation, artifacts are not sought for the collection. Thus, plaques or trophies, etc. are not being preserved. We need only provide letters, plans, specs, correspondence, etc. for their historical significance.

Therefore if you have any files which may be historical in content related to our local chapter, and which should be stored and categorized with the rest of the Chapter's History at the AHC, please contact me at 452-2500 or email at randys@txap.com. I'd be glad to coordinate a time to meet and pick up the materials.

Respectively submitted,
Randy Schrecengost, Historian

The May 4, 1922 tornado pictured at the right was the only major tornado in Austin's history. Although the Capitol was not damaged, 13 Austinites were killed, 44 injured, and property damages were estimated at over half a million dollars.



AUSTIN CHAPTER ASHRAE

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE – AUSTIN CHAPTER HERITAGE

During the early 1950's, several heating and ventilation industry leaders in Austin would drive to San Antonio to attend meetings of ASHVE (American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers). The Southwest Texas Chapter of ASHVE also included the south Texas and Corpus Christi areas. After a while, several of the members began to think the trip was pretty long for a week night with heavy loads during the work day ahead, and regular attendance at the meetings began to diminish with enthusiasm waning.

As early as 1953, several of the regular attendees from Austin began discussing forming a local independent Chapter of ASHVE. Early members of the group were Mr. Frank Frazee, Mr. B. Segall, Jr. (1st President 1956-57), Mr. Atwell Lagow (2nd President 1957-58), Mr. James Rea (3rd President 1958-59), Mr. Ira Wilke (4th President 1959-60), Mr. Bill Luedecke (5th President 1960-61), Mr. Joe Boyer, and several others in Austin. The group promoted the idea of a separate Austin Chapter among all the engineers, contractors, and suppliers within the Austin Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning industry; and encouraged them to share their common goals and concerns.

At an Austin meeting of the ASHVE Southwest Texas Chapter in October of 1955, a proposal was brought forth to form the Austin Chapter. In attendance at this meeting were Mr. P.B. Gordon, National Vice President, Mr. D.M. Mills, Regional Director of this region, and all the members of the Board of Governors of the Southwest Texas Chapter. After lengthy discussions, it was generally felt that a healthy chapter could operate in Austin, and that the Southwest Texas Chapter of ASHVE would also be strengthened by localizing operations with separate chapters.

An organizational meeting was held in January of 1956 and was well attended. The enthusiasm was very high, and Mr. B. Segall, Jr. was elected the Chairman of the temporary organization with Mr. Atwell Lagow elected as Vice-Chairman. The group began meeting monthly and continued to meet; providing technical programs until the Austin Chapter was chartered. There is some uncertainty at this point as to when the chapter actually began. The chapter charter indicates a date of April 8, 1956, but the first newsletter said it was made official on July 19, 1956. Also, there was a slight name change. The Austin Chapter was the 63rd Chapter of the American Society of Heating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHAE). The July meeting was the first for the new Society year, and where the installation of permanent officers and the presentation of the Gavel were made by then Society President John W. James, and Society Secretary A.V. Hutchison. Several planning meetings were held by the Board of Governors and all the Officers worked hard to establish the Chapter with 43 official members with 3 awaiting membership by the Society's action.

The original officers and BOG were: B. Segall, Jr., President; Atwell Lagow, Vice-President; Perry Sisler, Treasurer; Mr. James Rea, Secretary; Mr. Ira Wilke, BOG; and Don Schuett, BOG. James Rea, and HVAC Salesman at the time, also designed and wrote the first newsletter of the Austin Chapter and it was called "The Austin Register". Jim Rea's dedication to the Austin HVAC industry prompted him to continue as the editor for the Chapter for many more years, as well as eventually become President. The newsletter was printed front and back on about 11 x 17 sized paper. The newsletter was then double folded to form a "business envelope" size mailer where an address and postage stamp was added to the "blank" section at the bottom of the back page. The cost to mail the 1958 newsletters was two (2) cents.

Meetings of the early Austin Chapter were held at the Pioneer Drive Inn meeting room at 829 Barton Springs Road, at the corner of Bouldin Avenue. The meal was usually chicken fried steak complete with

salad and desert, coffee or tea, and cost \$1.75. The reception and Social Hour usually began at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 7:00, Chapter Business and Announcements at 7:45, and the program at 8:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned around 9:30 to 9:45 p.m. (not unlike our meetings today).

The Chapter's main function then, as now, was to encourage professional growth and enjoy fellowship with other industry professionals. This goal was, and is now, achieved by hosting technical seminars and lectures, raising funds for technical research, and participating in regional conferences.

The very first Austin Register – Volume 1, No. 1, dated July 1956 – provided some of this information regarding the formation of the Austin Chapter of ASHVE. Additional information was gleaned from a few narratives provided by our former Historian, Mr. Eddie Bloomquist. This information is all available in the Austin History Center Archives.

This author will attempt to update the members periodically on the history of the Austin Chapter of ASHRAE.

Respectively submitted,
Randy Schrecengost, Historian

The Norwood Building incorporated two firsts when the 14-story structure was completed in 1929. It was the **first air-conditioned office building** in town and it had the **first self-parking ramped auto garage**, the "Motoramp." Earlier parking garages moved the cars up and down using large elevators.

