

NARRATIVE TEXTS

Ima Hogg, Philanthropist, 1882-1975

At age eight Ima Hogg had a room of her own in the governor's mansion and a startling name. Her father, Texas governor Jim Hogg, had named her after the heroine of an epic poem by his brother. The name did not hinder her—after a lifetime of philanthropy, she was known simply as “Miss Ima” by grateful Texans.

The governor took his daughter with him on visits to state hospitals and prisons. As a result she developed empathy for people in emotional straits. Ima lost her mother when she was just 13, but she followed her mother's example by filling her home with music.¹ In 1899 she entered The University of Texas at Austin. She left The University after two years to study piano in New York and then in Europe.

Ima's father died in 1906 and left a plantation south of Houston where oil was eventually discovered, making Ima and her brothers very wealthy. Ima considered her inheritance a public trust and determined to use it to benefit the community. In 1909 she was back in Texas teaching piano. In 1913 she helped found the Houston Symphony, a cause she continued to support for the rest of her life.

Ima's fiancé was killed during World War I. Struggling with depression, she secured treatment from a specialist in Philadelphia.² When she returned to Texas, Ima established the Child Guidance Center in Houston (1929). Her brother Will died in 1930, and Ima carried out his bequest to establish the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health at The University of Texas at Austin, contributing additional monies of her own.³ And, elected to the Houston School Board, she arranged symphony concerts for schoolchildren.

For many years Miss Ima avidly collected fine art and American antiques. She always intended this collection for the people of Texas, but no museum was large enough to house it. Consequently she donated her entire estate at Bayou Bend to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She restored the plantation her father had bought and transferred it to the State of Texas as the Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historical Park, and she repaired her parents' first home in Quitman, Texas, in which the town subsequently opened a museum. She also refurbished a stagecoach inn in Winedale and presented it to The University of Texas.⁴ Active to the last, she died at age 93 while on a trip to London to visit museums. Ima Hogg was the first woman to receive a Distinguished Alumna award from The University of Texas at Austin (1963) and the first recipient of its Santa Rita award (1968), highest honor that The University can bestow on an individual.⁵



Quotations

*Most of my compulsions are rooted and grounded in the University of Texas.*⁶

*While I shall always love Bayou Bend and everything there, in one sense I have always considered that I was only holding my collection in trust.*⁷

*Many people assume that if one has plenty of money, one's situation is ideal. They forget that I have no husband, no children, and no close relatives in Houston. On Sundays the servants are off, and if you had not called, I would have been alone all day in that empty house.—Ima Hogg to a friend coming to take her for a drive*⁸

Photo

Caption: “Ima Hogg, c. 1910.” To come from Center for American History, UT Austin.

Endnotes

¹ Information about Ima's parents comes from Jamie Ross, “Hogg, Ima, informational paper,” Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, <http://www.learningtogive.org/papers/index.asp?bpid=104> (November 18, 2005), and from Ann Fears Crawford and Crystal Sasse Ragsdale, *Women in Texas: Their Lives, Their Experiences, Their Accomplishments* (Austin: State House Press, 1992), pp. 142-55. Additional biographical details in this article are from Virginia Bernhard, “Hogg, Ima,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/HH/fho16.html> (March 31, 2005); from “Miss Ima Hogg,” *Historic Houston: Great Houstonians*, online <http://www.houstonhistory.com/ghoustonians/history8ff.htm> (November 18, 2005); and from “The Life of Ima Hogg,” Museum of Fine Arts, College of Education, University of Houston, <http://www.fm.coe.uh.edu/comparisons/ima1.html> (November 18, 2005).

² Fiancé's death in “Miss Ima Hogg,” *Historic Houston: Great Houstonians*, online; and from David Westheimer, “High on the Hogg,” *Senior Women Web*, <http://www.seniorwomen.com/articles/david/articlesDavidIma.html> (November 18, 2005). Mental health treatment from 1918 to 1920 in “Hogg, Ima,” *Handbook of Texas Online*.

³ “Miss Ima Hogg,” *Historic Houston: Great Houstonians*, online; Crawford and Ragsdale, *Women in Texas*, p. 151.

⁴ This enumeration of Ima Hogg's accomplishments is from “Hogg, Ima,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, and from “The Life of Ima Hogg,” Museum of Fine Arts, online.

⁵ “Miss Ima Hogg,” *Historic Houston: Great Houstonians*, online.⁶ Ima Hogg, quoted in Crawford and Ragsdale, *Women in Texas*, p. 151.

⁷ Ima Hogg, quoted in “The Life of Ima Hogg: The Collector,” Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, online.

⁸ Quoted in *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/HH/fho16.html>.