

The Case of the Battling Neighbors

Cause No. 184, 193 City of Houston v. City of West University Place

Judge Mark Davidson



Oscar Holcombe

The Biblical story of David v. Goliath is well known to most. Few people know of the history of the acrimonious relationship between two adjoining cities in Harris County. The large, cosmopolitan City of Houston and the much smaller, largely residential City of West University Place. They have gone to war in the Courthouse several times in their history, with varying results each time.

One case is cause No 184, 193, filed in the 113th District Court in 1930. The case arises out of a contract signed in 1934 by Houston Mayor Oscar Holcombe and West University Mayor H. B. Schlesinger. In it, Houston agreed to provide access to its sanitary sewer system for the sum of \$1.00 per month per house to the city of West U. The city was fairly small, and had only begun to develop. While people started moving in in 1916, the city was not incorporated until 1924. Houston's petition claimed that \$4321.00 was due and owing. West U fired back with special exceptions asking that Houston be required to plead every single home in West U that had been hooked into the sewer system. Judge Allan P. Hannay granted the exceptions, and what followed was a list of the developed homes in West U.

