

# FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## *ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE*



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### Abstract: **Howard Grounds**

Howard Grounds was an engineer on the state railroad operated in the Sugar Land area for forty years. He followed his grandfather and his father as a railroad employee and was very proud that he had the honor of driving the Sugar Land Rail Road on its last run. Howard joined the US Navy during World War II and served in the South Pacific on three Navy cruisers. He was in thirteen major invasions from Wake Island to Tokyo Bay. He worked for a few years for the Union Pacific railroad but spent most of his career with the Sugar Land state railroad. Howard drove the train from Sugar Land to the Arcola Sugar Mills in House, Texas, to Hawdon and into Houston on the tracks beside FM 521 that are there today and returned the same day.

14 Pages

⇓ *Scroll down for Key Words from the Interview.* ⇓

## Interview Summary

### People (in order mentioned in interview)

Allen Johnson – mother’s cousin  
 Fraddie Parsons  
 Laura Bushhall – Spanish land grant  
 Gene and Barbara Foster – owned Viking Den  
 Beard – Brakeman, Sugar Land RR  
 C. E. McFarland – Conductor, Sugar Land RR  
 R. T. Bishop – Brakeman, Sugar Land RR  
 Mona Fenn – author, *Glimpses of Our History*

### Places / Businesses

World War II  
 Galveston, Texas  
 Trinity, Texas  
 Texas State railroad  
 Brazos River Bridge  
 Freeport, Texas  
 Hoskins Mound  
 Firestone Tire  
 Trammels, Texas  
 Rosharon, Texas  
 Anchor, Texas  
 Scanlan Plantation  
 FM 521 at Hawdon, Texas  
 Freeport, Texas  
 Velasco, Texas  
 Hoskins Junction  
 Angleton, Texas  
 St. Louis, MO

Huntsville, Texas  
 Palestine, Texas  
 Taylor, Texas  
 Riley Junction  
 Longview, Texas  
 Southern Pacific Railroad  
 Brazos River  
 Echo, Texas  
 Houston Port and Terminal  
 Columbus, Texas  
 Rotary  
 Kiwanis Club  
 Colorado River  
 Washington, D. C.  
 League City, Texas  
 Stafford, Texas  
 California  
 Westfield, Texas  
 Conroe, Texas  
 Old General – Civil War train engineer  
 Galveston Railroad Museum  
 Frost Ranch  
 Jackson, TN  
 San Diego, CA  
 South Pacific  
 Wake Island  
 Tokyo, Bay, Japan  
 Zulch, Texas

## Events

Some railroad bridges crossed bridges and bayous that cars and trains shared.

During Hurricane Carla wherever the water went underneath the tracks all the logs from the beach stopped against the rails at each trestle and the waves of the storm pushed on the logs that bent the rails down together still nailed to the cross ties.

Grounds has extensive knowledge of the history of trains in his time as well as a few museum pieces. He volunteered at the Galveston Railroad Museum for a program called Operation Lifesaver that tried to keep kids off the railroad tracks and avoid injury.