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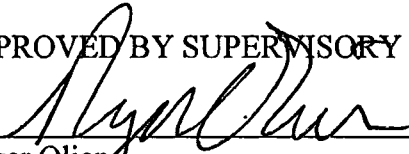
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VOLUNTEERISM: DEVELOPS COMMUNITIES, TRAINS LEADERS,

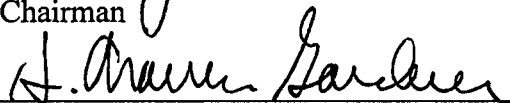
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ODESSA, TEXAS 1896-1948

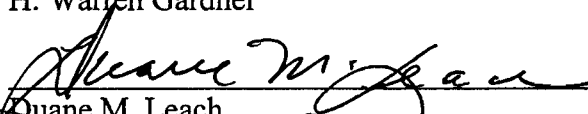
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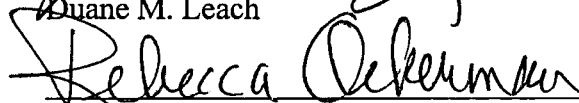
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VOLUNTEERISM
DEVELOPS COMMUNITIES, TRAINS LEADERS, AND GUARDS
DEMOCRACY: ODESSA, TEXAS 1896-1948

by

DEBRA NOE GIBBS, B.A.

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Faculty of History

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Abstract

Volunteers were an essential tool used to build our nation and communities. The creation and maintenance of communities across the United States relied heavily on the activities of volunteers and their organizations in order to meet the endless needs of both the citizens and the infrastructure. Furthermore, volunteer organizations provided an increase and stability in democracy and in building communities in a variety of ways. First, volunteer organizations filled needs that the government was not able to meet. Second, they were training grounds for developing the skills needed to manage communities. Volunteer associations, by providing avenues and developing skills, helped expand democracy to include those left unrepresented or underrepresented. Third, volunteerism provided an avenue for women and other marginalized groups to engage in policy-making. By seeing the needs of the community and then taking action to meet those needs, volunteer efforts clearly helped develop communities.