

# Historic Hotels!

## XXIX: Galveston's *Flagship Hotel*

The USS Flagship is located on Galveston Islands Pier. The pier-based hotel stretches 1000 feet out to sea, capturing a panoramic view. Visitors may bring your fishing gear and fish off the t-head, enjoy the sun at the outdoor pool, or at the beach. Rooms include a breathtaking view over the sparkling waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Gaze upon the horizon as the hues of the days spectacular sunrises and sunsets. Within 1 to 3 miles, enjoy Moody Gardens, Galveston Historic Homes Tour, The Grand Opera House or a walk on the Strand.

Yes, it's something different...Galveston Mayor Brantly Harris initiated development of the "Pleasure Pier" during his term between 1939-1942. The city borrowed 2 million dollars to open the 25th Street pier just in time for it to be taken over by the U.S. Army for the duration of World War II. After the war, Galveston tried to create an "Atlantic City" by adding a dance pavilion, midway, and carrousel to the pier. In 1965, Houston banker James Lyon opened the The Flagship Hotel Over the Water on the old Pleasure Pier. It was considered the only hotel over the tide. The Flagship has since changed owners and paint but remains pretty much them same as it did 30 years ago.

Last October, a Houston businessman announced plans to build an amusement park and first-class hotel in Galveston on a pier over the Gulf of Mexico. The Galveston City Council accepted Tilman Fertitta's bid to buy the Flagship Hotel and pier for \$500,000 and to pump at least \$7.5 million into renovations of the 40-year-old hotel. Fertitta said he will spend much more to repair and extend the pier, erect a roller coaster and other rides and transform the hotel into an 1800s-style inn. "You will think it had been built in the 1800s and it had been remodeled over the years like any other historic hotel," he said. The council's acceptance of the deal came after a court battle in which the businessman leasing the hotel claimed control until 2031. A federal judge ruled that the lease expires in 2006, and Fertitta indicated to council Thursday that he will try to buy out the lease before that.

Fertitta, a Galveston native, is president of Landry's Seafood Restaurants.

The hotel's current distinctive features include: the ocean breeze restaurant, a breakfast buffet on the weekends, a Game Room for our guests, a fresh-water pool overlooking the Gulf of Mexico and Seawall Boulevard .

