

## Texas Book Building Will Be Left as Is, Its New Owner Says

Nashville Collector of Kennedy  
Memorabilia Mulls Entry Fee,  
Calls Preservation Only Aim

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DALLAS—The Texas School Book Depository Building, from which the rifle shots that killed President Kennedy were allegedly fired on Nov. 22, 1963, will soon become "another Ford's Theater."

That's the plan of the building's new owner, Aubrey Mayhew, a Nashville, Tenn., business executive, who paid \$650,000 for the seven-story structure at a carnival-like auction here last week. In an interview, he said he "hopes to preserve the building just at it is, so that day will always be remembered."

Accomplishing that goal without turning the building into a garish tourist trap (as many local residents fear) will be difficult, Mr. Mayhew concedes. Already, he has received—and turned down—an offer to buy the sixth floor window and frame where the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, set up his sniper's post. (Similar offers were advanced even before the building was sold. Its former owner, Col. D. H. Byrd, a Dallas oil and real estate executive, says one group offered to buy the building so it could market the structure's bricks for \$1 each.)

Mr. Mayhew insists he hasn't any such plans. He's considering, however, a policy that would allow tourists to walk through the building for \$1 each (50 cents for children and members of groups).

"It won't have any signs, or concession stands, or postcards," Mr. Mayhew says. "That would be too commercial—and I'm not in this for the money." (He certainly didn't pay much for the 67-year-old building, auction observers said. Mr. Byrd, for example, called the winning bid "a great disappointment." Earlier estimates had placed the building's value at between \$750,000 and \$1,750,000.)

Friends and business associates of Mr. Mayhew say his intentions are serious. "I know he'll keep the building as an attractive memorial to J.F.K. His heart is with the Kennedys," says a Nashville acquaintance. "He's an honest, sincere human being," says Dr. Gerald Steinberg, a Silver Spring, Md., dentist who is a Kennedy buff.

Oddly enough, sources close to Mr. Mayhew believe he doesn't think the fatal shots were fired from the depository, or that Oswald was the sniper. What's more, though Mr. Mayhew says he isn't actively interested in politics, he calls himself a conservative Republican who "didn't think much" of President Kennedy's policies.

The slightly built, modishly dressed Mr. Mayhew says his interest in the late Mr. Kennedy stems from the fact that "J.F.K. is the only President who's been assassinated in my lifetime." He says the interest may have a personal motivation as well: A cousin served in the Secret Service detail protecting the President the day of the assassination.

Since the assassination, Mr. Mayhew has been amassing material on Mr. Kennedy. He says he owns about 50,000 items connected with the President's life (including a reference book he wrote in 1968 called "The World's Tribute to John F. Kennedy in Metallic Art," which he says has sold 15,000 copies). One part of the collection keeps him particularly busy: He's gathering autographs of persons who were associated with the President.

Besides his duties as director of the Nashville record division of Certron Corp., an Anaheim, Calif., manufacturer of magnetic tapes and precision plastics, Mr. Mayhew also operates a memorial center in Nashville where his Kennedy memorabilia is displayed. The admission he charges at the center is the same as the one he plans for the depository; proceeds from the admission help to finance his burgeoning collection, he says.

Though he admits he's been criticized as "a nut" for his activity, Mr. Mayhew insists he has no other motive than to preserve the mate-

rial record of President Kennedy's life. "I want to recreate the life of an historical person through the material objects of that life. You could say it's like trying to put everything possibly connected with one particular subject into a time capsule, not to honor that subject, but to remember it," he explains.