

BROWNIE

Title: Brownie

Artist: Amateis, Louis

Date: 1905

Type: Sculpture

Medium: Bronze

Location: Hermann Park

Brownie is one of the first publicly-owned sculptures in Houston. Made by Italian artist [Louis Amateis](#) in 1905, it was financed by the children of Houston through a penny drive. Originally placed in what is now Sam Houston Park as part of a water fountain in 1907, Brownie was stolen in 1935. It was recovered and went back to the park, but it was stolen and found a second time. To safeguard it, it went into storage for many years. In 1966, Council Member Lee McLemore found it and put a plan into action to return it to public view. In 1968, it was relocated to the [Houston Zoo](#), where it was displayed in the brand new Children's Zoo. It was moved to its current location in the reflection pool in 2001.

The cast bronze sculpture shows an elf in a pointed cap and pointed shoes holding forth a bowl, as if asking for a handout. In order to restore its patina, it was restored in 2002.

The sculptor, Louis Amateis, was born in Italy. After studying at the Institute of Technology and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Turin, and after launching an award-winning art career there, he immigrated to the United States, living first in New York City, and then in Washington, D.C. He had a distinguished academic career and produced many works of nationally significant monumental art, including four in Galveston, and, in stark contrast to the tiny playfulness of Brownie, the solemn enormity of Spirit of the Confederacy in Sam Houston Park. Amateis died in Washington, D.C. in 1913.

