

PIONEER TRAILS

A PUBLICATION OF THE DALLAS COUNTY PIONEER ASSOCIATION
DALLAS, TEXAS

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FOURTH QUARTER 1981

THE LAST QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION WAS HELD ON ^{Sept.} ~~JULY~~ 17, 1981 AT WYATT'S CAFETERIA IN PRESTON CENTER. OUR SPEAKER WAS A VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE YOUNG MAN, LIEF SANDERBERG, FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN REHABILITATION OF THE CITY OF DALLAS. HIS SUBJECT WAS THE RESTORATION OF THE WEST END HISTORIC DISTRICT OF DOWNTOWN DALLAS. ALL OF US ENJOYED THE TALK AND SLIDES AND I FEEL SURE THAT ALL OF US LEARNED A GREAT DEAL. DALLAS IS "COMING OF AGE" AMONG THE LARGER CITIES OF THE UNITED STATES AND TO KNOW THAT THE EFFORT TO RESTORE AND RECLAIM THE OLDER PARTS OF OUR CITY IS BEING HANDLED SO WELL AND FAITHFULLY IS A MATTER WE CAN FEEL PRIDE IN.

DALLAS COUNTY TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS

A number of towns and communities of Dallas County have important parts in the history of the metropolitan area and several are almost as old as the city itself.

One of these is Cedar Hill, which is situated on a high prairie hill southwest of Dallas. Its name came from the cedar brakes on Mountain Creek. It shares with Farmers Branch the distinction of being, next to Dallas, the oldest existing settlement in the county. Some of the early settlers who received land grants were Uzzel Baggett, Joseph Murden, Elisha McCommas, Henry Ward, Hugh Robinson and Daniel H. Gray.

In 1856 Cedar Hill was blown away by a storm (probably one of our famous tornadoes). Only two houses remained after the storm and eleven persons were killed. However, it was rebuilt, and today is one of the fastest growing areas in the metroplex. It is a lovely part of the county. In the spring, the bluebonnets are beautiful in the area. It does boast of the highest point in the county, also.

Farmers Branch, north and west of Dallas was better known and larger than Dallas from 1842 until 1850. In 1850 there was a blacksmith shop, a mill, both a Baptist and Methodist Church, a school taught by Mrs. R. J. West and a post office with Isaac B. Webb as postmaster. Farmers Branch was advertised by Peters Colony and as a result, a large number of industrious and well-to-do settlers of English, Irish and Scotch descent came and built permanent homes. These settlers, for the most part, brought their slaves with them, contributing greatly to the agricultural development of the community. In 1850 the settlers of Farmers Branch owned more slaves than all the rest of the county combined.

In 1847 Mrs. A. Bledsoe bought one-half of the Roderick Rawlins survey and laid off the town of Lancaster, naming it in honor of the place where he was born, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Lancaster is south of Dallas on Ten-Mile Creek. It was incorporated in 1886. A number of well-to-do pioneers settled near Lancaster early in the settlement of the county and their contribution to the development of the area was important. They improved their farms and prospered. One of these families was the Whites, from Tennessee. Another was the Henry family, originally of the French Colony. Some of the other pioneer citizens were Jones Green, Captain Mid Perry, Thomas M. Ellis, Roderick Rawlins and A. Bledsoe.

Richardson is located north and east of Dallas. It was established in 1872 near the old town of Brackenridge that flourished before the Civil War. Brackenridge had grown up near where Restland Cemetery is now. The earliest settlers in this area were the Huffhines, who came about 1851. Other families came with them, also, but the Huffhines were numerous; father John Huffhines and nine sons. They came from Simpson and Warren Counties, Kentucky. It was said they made the journey in forty-eight days. Most of these settlers bought their land, at 50¢ an acre. The town gradually moved from the original location to the railroad.

Mesquite is on the prairie east of Dallas. It began its growth in 1872 as a railway station. Its name came from the mesquite trees in the area. The first inhabitants were Major Bradfield, the station agent; J. J. Galleher, station clerk and a few scattered farm homes. It was incorporated in 1887.

Garland is Northeast of Dallas on Duck Creek. The settlement was originally known as Duck Creek. In 1886 the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad located its line about one mile east of the old town of Duck Creek. A town was at once laid out on the railroad and called Embree. Soon all the businesses had moved to Embree. Soon another railroad, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas ran its line near Embree, and another town sprang up using the name of the original town, Duck Creek. The two towns were rivals, and many schemes were enacted for one to surpass the other. One of the prominent citizens of Duck Creek, Thomas Nash, along with some other citizens, prevailed on Embree to change its name to Garland in honor of the then postmaster general. As soon as this was done, Duck Creek also adopted the name and the two towns gradually merged. Garland was incorporated in 1891.

Carrollton is located north and west of Dallas. It was originally Trinity Mills. It was well known because of the Witt steam mill, which was built in 1853. There was a post office and several stores. People came from miles to the mill to have their corn ground. In 1872 the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad ran its line two miles south of Trinity Mills. Soon the town moved to the railroad and became known as Carrollton. Alexander W. Perry was the original owner of the townsite of Carrollton. He gave the railroad the land for the depot and laid off the land in town lots. Carrollton at one time had two brick plants and is said to have produced an excellent grade of brick. This was around 1900. One of the plants was destroyed by a boiler explosion and somehow the production of brick dwindled away.

Irving was known as Gorbett in 1880. It lies northwest of Dallas. The town in 1880 had a post office and general store which were run by Thomas C. Story. In 1882 or 1883 the post office and store were moved to the Kit community, again near the railroad. Two of the railroad civil engineers, who were doing the surveying for the railroad, purchased a tract of land and began to sell

lots for a town about the same time that the post office was moved. So began another town.

Grand Prairie, west and south of Dallas, was first known as Deckman. The settlement began just after the Civil War. It was named for Alexander Deckman, who owned the land. The name was changed when the Texas & Pacific railroad was built in 1875-76. It was renamed because of its location on the eastern edge of the grand prairies of Texas.

This is all that there is time or space for in this issue of the newsletter. It seems that it might be a good idea to continue this sort of thing each quarter. There are so many little communities which have been swallowed up by the larger ones: Cockrell Hill, Lisbon, Rylie, Vickery, Sunnyside, Florence Hill, Rose Hill, Buckingham, Cochran Chapel, Webb Chapel and on and on. If some of you would please contribute some of the histories of the communities in which your forefathers settled (and in which you may still live) it would help our cause and also help establish a sense of togetherness among us - seems that is what this Association is all about, isn't it? One case which I can think of right now is the community of Letot - what about it, Gus, can you furnish a story?

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD AT J'S CAFETERIA, 3068 MOCKINGBIRD... THIS IS ACROSS THE STREET FROM MRS. BAIRD'S BREAD ON MOCKINGBIRD CLOSE TO THE INTERSECTION WITH AIRLINE.

TIME: 6 PM

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1981

THE PROGRAM WILL BE A PRESENTATION BY MRS. MARY GRIFFITH, SECRETARY OF THE DALLAS HERITAGE COUNCIL, OF A SLIDE PROGRAM ON THE HISTORY OF DALLAS.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1982 WILL BE HELD. PLEASE TRY TO ATTEND THIS MEETING.





Dallas County Pioneer Association

Founded 1875, Reorganized 1979

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