



Dallas County Pioneer Association

Founded 1875. Reorganized 1979

MAY 1984 NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1984

OUR NEXT MEETING IS FAST APPROACHING: June 7, Thursday at the Wyatt's Northlake Cafeteria at the intersection of Ferndale and Northwest Highway. You should plan to eat and visit between 6 & 7pm; we will start the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag and the Texas Flag, any announcements and the program will start promptly at 7pm. WE ARE ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO HAVE JUDGE FRANK CROWLEY as our guest speaker. Since Dallas is host to the Republican National Convention in August, his talk will be about the early Republican party in Dallas and Texas.... Be There!

On April 8th, the Dallas County Pioneer Association supplied input into PHASE III of the Goals for Dallas at the Walnut Hill United Methodist Church. The Goals for Dallas Organization requested a meeting of between six and twenty persons; our members participating were Coye and George Hawpe, Ruth and John M. Howell, Mary Charles Jacobie, Nancy Lennon, Robert W. Sears, June Shipley, Emily and Russell Surles, Jr. and Jaclie and Bill Jacoby.

We regret to pass on the information that John Howell had a stroke recently; we all hope that his recovery is rapid and complete.

The family of Dr. John Cole had a family reunion; they met at the ancient pecan tree (the one at the intersection of Oak Lawn Street and Armstrong Parkway which the Coles planted on their property) at noon on the 19th of May. They had a group picture made then moved to the Dealey Recreation for a luncheon and other activities.

For the remainder of this year, we want to put all announcements made in the newsletter so we will have more time for our speaker and to socialize. Please call Bill Jacoby at 351-6338 if you have any information about any of our members, or if you have any questions or suggestion to make about YOUR association.

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The front porch was a loss of a lifetime

By WAYNE GARD

On summer evenings, after the supper dishes were washed, the whole family often sat out on the front porch, watching the slowly vanishing red glow in the west. In the pasture across the road, along Crooked Creek, our cow Daisy would be bedding down for the night. From the woods to the north we sometimes heard the plaintive notes of the whip-poor-will. In the late summer or early fall, hundreds of noisy grackles might be flying about in nearby trees. "The blackbirds are having a meeting," Mom would say.

Over cold lemonade or sliced watermelon, grownups might be talking about the weather or crops or Teddy Roosevelt's Big Stick or the new flying machines. We boys more likely would be arguing over the best place to find catfish.

All of us took note of anyone driving by on the dusty road. It might be Dr. Harris hastening to treat some ailing patient or to deliver a baby. It might be some dressed-up swain in a polished buggy, on his way to spark a farmer's daughter. Any vehicle made village news.

A decade later, in a bigger house in a larger town, the front porch still was an evening gathering place, although now the street was paved and buggies had given way to brass-colored Fords and other cars with horns sounded by pressing a rubber bulb. The porch was breezier and cooler than the inside of the house, and this one had a wide wooden swing in which Mom sometimes snapped beans or shelled peas in the morning or took her hand sewing in the afternoon. In the evening, neighbors might comment on the sinking of the Titanic or the swashbuckling of Kaiser Bill. After dark, the jingle of the approaching ice cream man brought the kids out to buy cones for bedtime snacks.

But in later years, something happened to the front porch. Architects and builders quit attaching porches to new houses and many of the older ones were walled in to make extra bedrooms or television rooms. With air conditioning, the porch wasn't needed for coolness, and with television for evening entertainment, more people preferred to stay indoors.

Yet, a great deal was lost in the disappearance of the front porch. Family life was less unified, and neighborliness suffered. The relaxing

SOUTHWEST LETTER



Wayne Gard

effect of the porch, with its rocking chairs, was not easily achieved by anyone sitting before a television screen in a closed room.

Lately, some builders have been trying to make their houses completely airtight and owners of old homes have been pressured to buy more insulation. Every week or two some salesmen phone me, trying to sell insulation, weather stripping or storm windows. I'm told how much money such insulators save, but am told nothing about the harm they do by looking in pollution.

James Woods, director of the Building Energy Utilization Laboratory at Iowa State University, notes that "as they become more energy ef-

ficient, homes have become less forgiving environmentally." Instead of providing fresh air, they hold inside such pollutants as tobacco smoke, kitchen smoke, carbon monoxide and many other harmful gases. In some instances, the high humidity of the air-conditioned home indicates that pollutants are building up and that a change of air is needed.

Earlier builders in many countries have known the need for fresh air in the home. Examples of their work are ventilating windows and such features as the piazza of Italy, the verandah of Spain and Portugal and the gallery of our Old South.

Now, R.D. Reed, professor of architecture at Texas A&M University and a member of the national energy committee of the American Institute of Architects, calls on architects to restore the front porch. In seminars being held all over the country, the designers of homes are being reminded of the value of afternoon shade and evening breezes.

Will such efforts bring favorable response? Probably most householders, especially in the South, are too attached to their air conditioning and their television sets to give them up for an hour in the gloaming, but undoubtedly some will welcome a return to contacts with nature that our technology has lost. Even when there is no one with whom to chat, some may enjoy a bit of front-porch idleness as a relief from the strain and tension of the day.

Historian Wayne Gard of Dallas is the author of a number of books on the frontier west, including "The Chisholm Trail," "The Great Buffalo Hunt," "Frontier Justice," "Sam Bass" and "Rawhide Texas." And, his home has no air conditioner.

Southwest

Dallas Times Herald

Sunday, May 20, 1984 •