



**Dallas County Pioneer Association**  
**Founded 1875, Reorganized 1979**  
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## From the President



Hopefully, everyone is well. As you know Covid-19 is keeping us from meeting. We hope to be able to meet in December but that is unknown as of now. If any members have any needs please let an Officer know so we might be able to help. Please remember to wash your hands frequently and stay home unless you really must be out and then wear a mask.

Jim Bookhout, President

*Here is any interesting story about early Dallas entertainment from D Magazine:*

### THE TRINITY BRIDGE JUMPERS



### **The 1897 Battle of the Trinity Bridge Jumpers**

**When a New Yorker tried to raise money to jump off the Commerce Street bridge into the Trinity, a local was "determined that the honor of Dallas should be upheld."**

On Sunday, March 21, 1897, a crowd of 6,000 people converged on the Commerce Street Bridge to watch a high-diving exhibition by a man named J.B. Wilson who had pledged to dive 65 feet, headfirst, from the top of the bridge, into the rain-swollen Trinity River.

Just before it was time to jump, Wilson announced that monetary contributions were necessary before he would begin. The crowd's mood soured. After an hour of walking through the unamused crowd with a collection box, Wilson's take was a mere \$13. Unhappy, he informed the crowd that the payment was not enough to warrant a 65-foot dive—instead, he would leap from the lowest part of the bridge, about 35 feet. The crowd jeered, and his dive was met with icy silence.

Then, standing on the highest point of the bridge, a cocky 22-year-old shouted to Wilson, "You're not the only turtle in the tank!" Before anyone realized what was happening, he tore off his coat and jumped feet-first into the river. The stunned crowd erupted in cheers, and Arch Sexton, a local candy-maker, became the unexpected hero of the hour.

Wilson, damp and upstaged, left town quietly, and young Sexton reveled in his brief fame as Dallas' "world champion" Trinity Bridge Jumper (a title which, as far as we know, still stands). —Paula Bosse

## From the Vice President



I hope our newsletter finds all of you well and in good cheer. As the virus remains a threat to so many people, we continue to refrain from various activities. There are a number of things we don't do anymore, and I think we can all agree our Association meetings are sorely missed. I can't help but wonder what our pioneer ancestors would think about our modern medicine and our reaction, as a society, to this pandemic.

In the pioneer times we know that people simply suffered through all kinds of diseases and infections and they lived or died according to their fortitude, or their luck, or the will of God, with little or no help from medicine. There is a Lagow family story that was told to me by my Grandfather's sister's son, concerning a pair of Lagow brothers who marched off to fight in the Civil Wars. They walked from Texas to Virginia and participated in at least one battle. In that battle, one of those men was injured severely enough that he could not walk on his own. His brother resolved to get him back home to Texas, on foot, a thing I can't even imagine. The injured fellow could not walk without his brother propping him up on one side, and using his rifle as a crutch on the other side. They walked back home that way, instead of bed rest and medicine he healed slowly on the march, his treatment being nothing more than constant movement, hunger, discomfort and pain. But he made it home. I sure would like to talk to him!

I was very fortunate to have been close to my Father's Father, who lived a long life and spent a lot of time with me when I was a child. Lately I have been given much cause to remember how seriously he took the yearly influenza outbreak. He was a boy during the deadly flu season of 1918 to 1919, right here in Dallas. He told me that it killed a lot of people, including people that he knew, and that I should always get medical attention if I caught the flu. He had a fear of influenza which was not in keeping with his generally fearless outlook.

Being young and smug, I didn't take him very seriously, thinking that our modern medicine would prevent widespread death from any such epidemic, and that 1918 was too long ago to be relevant to those modern times I was living in. I know better now, of course, and I took a little time to read about that influenza epidemic from 1918. I learned that in many ways things weren't so very different for our people and our leaders then than they are now. Here is a link to an article about that epidemic:

<https://www.influenzaarchive.org/cities/city-dallas.html#>

In closing, thank you all for your continued interest and participation in the Dallas County Pioneer Association and hopefully we'll all get together soon!

Godspeed, Joe Watts. Vice President

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# Judge John Bookhout

Great Grandfather of our President



John Bookhout, Associate Justice of the U.S. Court of Civil appeals built his home on the corner of Masten (now St. Paul) and Caruth (now Munger) streets in 1891.

This grand house was designed by James Flanders. The residence was demolished in 1927 for a parking lot.

Obituary: Judge John Bookhout, for fifteen years Associate Judge of the Fifth Court of Civil Appeals at Dallas, died yesterday afternoon at 4:15 o'clock at his residence, after a lingering illness of three weeks. Death came as the result of heart failure, Judge Bookhout had been in feeble health since January, 1912, when he resigned his Justiceship on account of a stroke of paralysis.

Judge Bookhout had lived in Dallas forty-two years and was one of the most prominent members of the local bar. Before his elevation to the bench he was associated in the law practice with Senator Charles A. Culberson, until the latter's election as Governor, and then with Judge Lauch McLaurin, now professor of law in the University of Texas.

John Bookhout was born in Roxbury, New York on March 20, 1849. He came to Texas at the age of 23, settling in San Antonio, where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. Two years later he removed to Dallas. On Dec. 14, 1875 he was married to Miss Ella Randail of Dallas. In 1897 he was appointed by Governor Culberson to fill the unexpired term of Judge H. W. Lightfoot as Associate Justice of the Court of Civil Appeals. He was retained by the people for each succeeding term until he retired in 1912.

## **LARGE PROPERTY HOLDER**

During his long residence in Dallas Judge Bookhout had made a number of successful investments in Dallas real estate, becoming a large property holder. His holdings included property in the business and downtown districts. In his long service on the bench he established for himself a reputation as a capable and impartial jurist.

Surviving Judge Bookhout are his wife, three sons, John J. Bookhout, James R Bookhout, George W. Bookhout, and four daughters, Mrs. J. W. Bourland, Mrs. J. F. Parks, Mrs. Will R. Harris, and Mrs. Dan G. Webster.

The funeral service will take place from the residence tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. Dr. W. D. Bradfield and Dr. George Gibson will conduct the ceremony. Burial will be in Oakland Cemetery. Arrangements will be completed today.

Obituary courtesy Dallas Morning News, March 14, 1916 edition.

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## Caruth Switch

**1913**

**EXCLUSIVE SUBURB  
TO BE ESTABLISHED**

**TOWN BEING PLANNED ON LARGE  
TRACT SIX MILES NORTHEAST  
OF COURT HOUSE.**

Plans are being rapidly completed for the building of an "exclusive residence" town at Caruths Switch as a suburb for Dallas. The property is owned by W. W. Caruth and is six miles northeast of the courthouse, near where the Missouri, Kansas and Texas and the Houston and Texas Central Railroads connect. It is also within a half mile of the intersection of the Sherman and Greenville interurbans. The town is to cover fifty acres, with a building restriction of at least

\$5,000 and perhaps \$10,000.

"We are boring for artesian water now," said Mr. Caruth. "I am having fifty acres surveyed and will place it on the market probably in about two months. The streets will be graded and graveled, with cement curbs and gutters, and sidewalks will all be four feet wide.

"No tract will be sold smaller than 100x200 feet. There will be a restriction against the erection of any residence to cost less than \$5,000, or possibly \$10,000, the idea being to make this a first-class suburb. The fifty-acre tract is a half mile south of the intersection of the Sherman and Greenville interurbans, but close enough to the Sherman line to give good service into the city even now."

It is also expected, that as soon as the settling of the new suburb commences, that the Houston and Texas Central will establish a station at Caruth. Mockingbird lane runs through the tract, and it is only one mile east of Southern Methodist University. Mr. Caruth said that after the university was completed, he expected to place some of his land near to it on the market.

- April 23, 1913, The Dallas Morning News, p. 4, col. 4.



**Unfortunately we will not be having a meeting this quarter because of the virus. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting whenever that may be.**

**Welcome to the new normal!!**

**The officers and members of the association hope you are staying safe and healthy and hopefully in the not overly distant future we will be meeting again with another great speaker and more fun with our friends and members who support this great organization.**

**If you have changed your mailing address, E-mail or phone numbers, please let Sheryl Curlee know by sending a note to [DCPA1875@gmail.com](mailto:DCPA1875@gmail.com)**

**If you haven't already paid your dues for this year or for 2021 or you would like to make a donation please make your payments to:**

**Dallas County Pioneer Association  
PO Box 12496  
Dallas, TX 75225**

## **Cemetery Report**

by Kathy Ann Reid

Our field trip in January included DCPA members Marsha Leach, Gwyneva Winters, John Hamilton, and prospective members Gregory and Georgeanne (Mills) Kout. We visited four cemeteries in Dallas: Pleasant Mound "Public" Cemetery, Lagow Cemetery, Beeman Cemetery and W. W. Glover Cemetery. I especially enjoyed watching the three Beeman descendants at

the Beeman Cemetery showing each other their respective ancestors' tombstones and discussing their family histories. The Beeman Cemetery and the Pleasant Mound "Public" are maintained by the City of Dallas Parks Maintenance Department, while the Lagow Cemetery and the Glover Cemetery depend on donations and volunteers for maintenance. On a recent trip to the Pleasant Mound "Public" Cemetery, I saw the beautifully repaired and painted wrought iron fence and gate. Thank you to the City of Dallas Parks Maintenance Department and the city welders!

The field trip in February included DCPA members Marsha Leach, Sheryl Curlee, and Robbie Robinson. We visited three cemeteries in Dallas: Westley Cockrell Cemetery, Western Heights Cemetery and Robinson Family Cemetery. We attempted to see Horton Cemetery/Crestview Cemetery, but did not gain access. Robbie directed us to the Historic Western Heights Church of Christ that is associated with his ancestors. At the Westley Cockrell Cemetery, we met a man who said he looks out for the cemetery and knows more about it than anyone. Probably true, we were all surprised to see a granite marker proclaiming, "Historic Texas Cemetery...Placed By The Dallas County Pioneer Association."

In March two cemetery committee members met at the W. W. Glover Cemetery and drew a sketch of the existing markers in the quadrant that has the most markers. We want to finish sketching the remainder of the markers as soon as possible.

In June Dallas Historical Commission recommended a state historical marker for the Benjamin Franklin Robinson Cemetery (Robinson Family Cemetery). Robbie Robinson was the applicant for the marker and is waiting to be notified of the final approval from Texas Historical Commission.

On a visit to the Warren Ferris Cemetery during their July workday, I met John Wilt, Master Naturalist, and other volunteers. Mr. Wilt agreed to meet our cemetery committee at a nearby cemetery to give suggestions on vegetation with reduced maintenance requirements and a possible source of volunteers.

Susanne Starling is happily locating and interviewing descendants of those buried in the Warren Ferris Cemetery. She first worked with Ferris descendants and now is working with the Chenault family descendants. We are looking forward to her Beeman article that is set to come out in the fall issue of Legacies. DCPA member, M.C. Toyer, assisted her and did the map illustrations, greatly adding to the article.

Your cemetery committee is open to suggestions, new members, and friends. Please let us know which Dallas County cemeteries interest you and any news you know about them.

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## The Pleasant Valley Cemetery

The Pleasant Valley Cemetery is located on Merritt Road in northeast Dallas County, one-quarter mile north of Pleasant Valley Road. A concrete driveway divides the new part from the old part. The old portion consists of all property on the left-hand side (north) of the concrete drive and the new portion consists of all property on the right-hand side.

Merritt Road, which is now situated in front of the cemetery, was originally located at the back of the cemetery. This road served as the dividing line between Mercers Colony and the District of Nacogdoches during the Republic of Texas era.

This pioneer cemetery is positioned on approximately three acres of land which is part of the original W. D. Penny (sometimes spelled Perry) 320 acre survey.

Soledy J. Newman, the daughter of Harmon and Emeline McDaniel Newman, was the first person buried at Pleasant Valley Cemetery. She was born in a log cabin at Pleasant Valley on August 26, 1864, and died January 26, 1874. Her grave is located at the back of the cemetery near the concrete drive.(1)

There is no known deed for the old section of this cemetery. However, the obituary for David M. Compton, which was printed in the Garland News in 1950, reads as follows: "Burial was in the Pleasant Valley Cemetery on the land which was donated for the cemetery by his father-in-law, the late Harmon Newman."



The newer portion, containing 1.4 acres, is located on the south side of the driveway and was purchased by the Pleasant Valley Cemetery Association for \$233 from Dr. George W. Newman on November 6, 1919.

A total of three different groups have organized to provide the cemetery's care and upkeep. The first group, known as the Ladies Cemetery Association of Pleasant Valley, was officially organized September 7, 1916. Bula Finley served as Secretary with Belle Moorman serving as president.

Members of this same group reorganized and received an Official Charter from the state of Texas on October 10, 1919 as the Pleasant Valley Cemetery Association. The third group was formed in 1975 with Judge Dee Brown Walker advising the organization. This organization was officially chartered as the Pleasant Valley Cemetery Foundation. Ray Boyd was elected president with Hubert Raney elected vice-president and Nora Pelton Sperling elected as secretary-treasurer.

Current officers of the Pleasant Valley Cemetery Foundation are Jim Foster, president; Delbert Todd, vice-president, and Wanda Pelton Smith serving as secretary-treasurer. The cemetery currently contains about 535 marked graves. Many of these graves contain the remains of the first pioneers and early settlers of the Pleasant Valley era. The total number of unmarked graves in this cemetery is not known.

Soldiers from the Civil War, and every major war since the Civil War, are also buried in this cemetery.(2) Other burials include numerous descendants of members from the 1854 wagon train which traveled from Monroe County Kentucky to the Pleasant Valley area.

There were three burials at the Pleasant Valley Cemetery on the same day in early January of 1919. All three victims died as a result of the dreaded 1918 Spanish Flue Epidemic. A bronze memorial marker honoring all Pleasant Valley area pioneers, early settlers and our loved ones who are laid to rest there was dedicated in 1997. This memorial marker was donated by Ken and Wanda Pelton Smith. This bronze marker also honors Winnie Compton Pelton Mooney for dedicating her life to the care and upkeep of the Pleasant Valley Cemetery. The Texas Historical Commission designated Pleasant Valley Cemetery as Historic Texas Cemetery on December 20, 2000.

[DCPA](#)

