



THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

The Newsletter of the Dallas County Historical Commission

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DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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DCHC Accomplishments in 2003

By Buddy Frazer, DCHC Chairman

The Dallas County Historical Commission (DCHC) had another successful year in 2003. The DCHC approved 13 marker applications. Dedication ceremonies were held at several significant sites including Dallas Love Field, Baylor University Medical Center, St. Mark's School and the Garland Public Schools. Mike Hayslip headed the DCHC Marker Review Committee with Shirley Cmar-Jones and Lindy Thomas serving as committee members. Carol Bell was added to the committee in early 2004.

DCHC members participated in a number of history-related workshops during 2003. Elizabeth Chandler attended the Texas Historical Commission (THC) regional workshop in Denton in February. Members Lindy Thomas, Elizabeth Chandler, Carol Bell and Jon Eric Simmons participated in the Coppell Preservation Conference in October. The DCHC was again an institutional co-sponsor of the Fifth Annual *Legacies* Dallas History Conference in September. Several members attended, and one of the speakers,

Jann Patterson of Dallas, was later appointed to the DCHC.

The DCHC worked closely with the Sixth Floor Museum. DCHC Chairman Buddy Frazer sits on the Museum's Board, and several other DCHC members participated in museum-sponsored events commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination.

DCHC member Joyce Hicks continued her contribution as a docent at the Florence Ranch Homestead in Mesquite, where she provides tours for hundreds of school children each year.

The DCHC members were given a tour of the historic Texas Theater in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas as part of one of the DCHC meetings. A major preservation project is underway in the building, which was the



DCHC Members toured the Texas Theatre.

site of Lee Harvey Oswald's arrest following the Kennedy assassination in 1963.

In July, the DCHC was one of ten local history organizations hosting a fund-raising reception in celebration of the THC's 50th anniversary. The event raised \$40,000 to fund the programs of the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission.

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Three Dallasites Receive THC Award of Merit

At the January Dallas County Historical Commission meeting, Awards of Merit from the Texas Historical Commission were handed out to three Dallasites. Receiving awards were Craig C. Holcomb for his work with Fair Park, and Bill Brown and Gary Ultee of WFAA-TV for their work on the documentary "Discovery of the Belle" about the excavation of La Salle's ship in Matagorda Bay. The award was pre-

sented by Texas Historical Commission member Diane Bumpas of Dallas.

"The Award of Merit recognizes outstanding contributions to preservation in Texas," according to Texas Historical Commission Executive Director Larry Oaks. "It is our way of saying thank you for helping to preserve the unique heritage we share as Texans."



Shown left to right are Gary Ultee, Bill Brown, Diane Bumpas and Craig Holcomb.

Beeman Cemetery Medallion Dedicated

A medallion marking the Beeman Memorial Cemetery was dedicated in ceremonies March 20.

The cemetery is believed to be the first in Dallas County dating back to 1842. The first documented grave was that of Holland Coffee Bryan, the infant son of Dallas founder John Neely Bryan and his wife Margaret Beeman Bryan.

Speaking at the ceremony were cemetery historical Frances James, DCHC

Chairman Buddy Frazer, and Beeman family member M. C. Toyer. Also attending was DCHC member Elizabeth Chandler and Dallas Parks & Recreation Department district director Richard Lyon.

The effort to obtain the marker was headed by Rose Marie Simmons, whose great-grandfather is buried there, and Karen Gassett, who is a member of the Beeman family.



Shown left to right are Frances James, Buddy Frazer, Rose Marie Simmons and Karen Gassett. (Photo by Elizabeth Chandler)

DCHC Recognizes Linz Award

The Dallas County Historical Commission recognized the Linz award with a resolution noting the award's 75th anniversary. The award, which this year recognizes Raymond Nasher, will be presented at a luncheon April 8 at the Wyndham Anatole

Hotel. Lawrence Oaks, Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission, is scheduled to speak at the event.

The award was created in 1924 by Simon Linz, one of the founders of Linz Jewelers. The first recipient was Elmer Scott, a sociologist who was civically

active at the time. Over the years the award has honored such Dallas notables as Woodall Rodgers, R. L. Thornton, Julius Schepps, Erik Jonsson, Robert Cullum, Annette Strauss, Lindalyn Adams, Jack Evans, Dave Fox, Ross Perot and Stanley Marcus.

2003 in Review Continued

(Continued from page 1)

Vice-Chair Clare Buie Chaney worked with a graphic design class at Addison's Greenhill School in developing a new website for the DCHC. She also continued to work with the Women's Museum in Dallas on a proposal for women's clothing exhibit.

Several DCHC members participated in the development of a new website which will link the numerous preserva-

tion organizations in the Dallas area. The effort is part of the THC's Visionaries in Preservation program. The website design was completed in late 2003, and the site is scheduled to be on-line in 2004.

DCHC members worked with the County staff and three cities to obtain funding and develop a request for proposal for a third installment of an historic resource survey of the county.

Participating will be Grand Prairie, DeSoto, and Duncanville.

All members of the DCHC continue to participate in numerous educational and civic activities in their local communities. The commission's website, www.dallaschc.org, contains a database of Dallas County historical makers and links to items of interest to historians, including back issues of this newsletter.

Lawrence Homestead Restoration Underway

By Charlene Orr, Historic Mesquite Inc.

Historic Mesquite, Inc. and the City of Mesquite are well into the interior restoration of the Stephen Decatur Lawrence homestead, the focal point of Opal Lawrence Historical Park. The \$142,000 project took on a new importance, however, while 1920s wallpaper was being removed from the walls.

In the easternmost room, the wallpaper had been covering a beautiful stenciled ceiling, painted in blacks and reds, with pink or salmon-colored walls. The design is quite striking and it has not been identified as of yet. The theories are the first Mrs. Lawrence came from a German background and brought the influence with her to Texas or an itinerant immigrant from further south Texas painted the ceilings and walls in exchange for food and lodging.

The bright paint colors were not a surprise. Art conservator, Stashka Starr, had already analyzed the wall colors, which at the time were muted blues and grays. However, in the master bedroom alone, Ms. Starr

found the same pinkish salmon colors on the wall with red accent paint on baseboards and windows.

The entire house was originally brightly painted, according to Ms. Starr's findings. The oldest part of the house, a one-story, was a green, which today one might call an avocado color, with black and gold accents.

After uncovering the painted ceiling, Ms. Starr, the project architect, Marcel Quimby, and an HMI representative were able to establish that the same design adorned the middle of the ceilings in the north bedroom, the hallway and in the master bedroom, although not to the extent as in the east room. Eventually, the stencil will be reproduced in those rooms and restored in the east room.

Phoenix I Restoration and Construction is in charge of the restoration project and should be completed by the end of February. The company also completed the exterior restoration of the house in 2003. Located at 701 E. Kear-



Restoration work inside the Lawrence homestead in Mesquite. (Photo by Marcel Quimby)

ney St. in Mesquite, the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark and is a Century Family Farm.

THC Sets New Marker Rules

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has adopted new rules for historical marker applications. According to the THC, "The rule changes are designed to clarify various aspects of the program and to make it easier to interpret particular topics not previously eligible for marking."

One of the main changes is to reduce the age requirement for subject marker topics from 75 to 50 years. This change makes subject marker requirements match those of the state's Recorded Texas Historic Landmark marker and the National Register of Historic Places. This will allow more recent topics, such as World War II and the Civil Rights movement, to be

honored while many of those individuals who participated are still living. Extremely significant events can still be marked after 30 years.

Other changes include reducing the age requirement for individuals, either as topics themselves or mentioned in marker inscriptions, to 10 years after their death. Also, the definition of the word "historical significance" has been clarified. The topic's influence, effect or impact on history and culture, and not age alone, determines historical significance.

Full details of the new guidelines are available on the THC's website, www.thc.state.tx.us.

Historic Preservation Conference Set for Fort Worth May 6-8

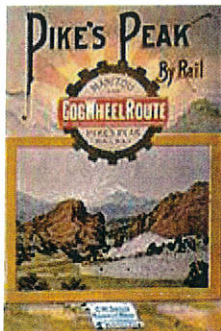
This year's Texas Historical Commission sponsored Historic Preservation Conference will be held in Fort Worth at the Radisson Plaza Hotel. Activities begin Thursday, May 6, with tours of Fort Worth, and a welcoming reception and dinner at the Texas & Pacific Railway Station.

Formal sessions begin Friday, May 7, and continue through Saturday morning on May 8. The Keynote Address on Friday morning will be given by Carol Shull, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information, check the THC website at www.thc.state.tx.us.

Don't Throw It Away!: The Importance of Ephemera

By Jann Patterson, DCHC Member



Photograph courtesy of DeGolyer Library Collections, Southern Methodist University.

Before you throw away that movie ticket stub or pitch that box of old Sears & Roebuck catalogs from Grandma's attic, think about what historical significance the items might have to scholars and to future generations who are looking for clues about a by-gone era.

Items that one typically would discard after use are part of the growing field of interest, called "ephemera." Webster defines "ephemera," as "something of no lasting value," or "collectibles (posters, broadsides, and tickets) not intended to have lasting value." Contrary to this definition, in recent years the field of ephemera has been growing rapidly.

The term, "ephemera," is now used to embrace a wide range of minor, everyday documents, most of which were originally intended for one-time or short-term use, including items such as postcards, posters, baseball cards, tickets, photographs, greeting cards, mail order catalogs, comic books, magazines, and calendars—just to name a few. These items

provide important insight into the history of everyday life, particularly that of average men and women in the past. Recognizing the importance of preserving this fragile component of our past, the Ephemera Society of America was founded in 1980 to encourage the preservation and study of paper ephemera.

As a result, today many libraries and research institutes house large collections of ephemera—everything from menus, to bus and train timetables, maps, and political buttons and brochures. For example, the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University has an extensive collection of items documenting the transportation industry.

Also at SMU, the Bywaters Collection houses the papers of Jerry Bywaters, former director of the Dallas Museum of Art. These archives are filled with ephemera that shed light on the life and times of Dallas in the early to mid-twentieth century. Invitations to gallery openings, advertisements in newspapers, and letters from friends and family provide vital information for researchers about the cultural formation of the City of Dallas at a crucial time in its history.

"Ephemera is important because it

serves as documentation, providing later generations with a window into locales, businesses, and institutions," says Sam Ratcliffe, Head, Bywaters Special Collections at SMU.

If you have items that you think might be of value to a public library, university or research institution, check that organization's website to learn about their special collections. In today's materialistic, throw-away world, it's important to stop and think about what traces of our current culture we are leaving for future generations.

Related websites of interest:

www.ephemerasyociety.org

<http://www.smu.edu/cul/hamon/collections/bywaterscollection.htm>

Archive Fee Imposed

The Texas Legislature has authorized counties to collect a Records Archive Fee to address the problem of deteriorating original documents. Proceeds from the fee are to be used to scan, or otherwise duplicate, original records, and to establish proper storage processes and facilities for those records.

As an example, the Texas Historical Records Advisory Board points out that, "Probate files may have been so damaged in the past by the use of tapes or housing in acidic folders that the originals will eventually self-destruct without appropriate treatments." Storage of records in facilities without proper temperature, humidity and light control can cause similar deterioration.

Dallas County began collecting a \$5 fee last October. However, preservation of records is nothing new here, since they have been making microfiche copies for a number of years.

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