



THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

The Newsletter of the Dallas County Historical Commission

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Historic Wheatland Cemetery Marker Dedicated

By Don Baynham

Members of the Wheatland Cemetery Association dedicated the new Wheatland Cemetery historical marker on May 3, 2009. Representing the Dallas County Historical Commission were Chairman Michael Lowenberg and Commissioners Linda Zander and Don Baynham. Due to weather, the ceremony was held in the historic Wheatland Church.

The Wheatland Cemetery Association was founded in 1908. The cemetery's grounds contain the remains of 94 veterans, from as far back as the Mexican-American War, and the names of many prominent local citizens adorn the headstones.

The Wheatland Church was founded in 1847 after Texas joined the Union. The original building was begun in 1856 and completed in 1859. In 1912, the steeple and stained-glass windows were added and the building was expanded.

Originally named the Branson-Brotherton Cemetery, this burial ground is on property donated by Tom Branson and H.K. Brotherton. The two men, Ohio natives, both were



DCHC members (left to right) Don Baynham, Linda Zander and Chairman Michael Lowenberg attended the historical marker dedication at Wheatland Cemetery.

farmers and owners of large tracts of land, and are buried here.

The Cemetery also has roots with Methodist congregations organized in the 1840's. The first Methodist Church in this area was Wesley Chapel. The Church moved here in 1864 to the community of Sproul's Corner (Sprowl's

Corner) which residents soon renamed Wheatland. Wesley Chapel also changed names to Wheatland Methodist Church. The congregation met on the land donated by Branson and Brotherton.

Although formally established in 1872, the cemetery contains a number of earlier burials,

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DCHC Appoints New Members

Dallas County Historical Commission members are volunteers appointed by the Dallas County Commissioners Court for two-year terms. Members serve as the first level of review for state historical markers. They advise the Court on historical preservation topics and conduct activities to assist in the preservation of the County's historical heritage. The newest members of the Commission have many ties to the Dallas community and are active in a number of cultural and civic organizations.

Don Baynham, appointed to the Dallas County Historical Commission by Commissioner Mike Cantrell, is Associate Vice President for Outreach and Advancement at Eastfield College. He began his career with the Dallas County Community College District 40 years ago, earned associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees at night, and eventually became a faculty member and then dean of the college.

Active in a number of organizations, Baynham is the immediate past chairman of the Dallas Historical Society and serves on the Dallas County Heritage So-

ciety board (Old City Park). Other civic involvements include the boards of Dallas Summer Musicals, the Garland Salvation Army, the Garland Boys and Girls Club, Leadership Garland, and Mesquite Social Services. He has also served on the DISD Multiple Careers Magnet School Advisory Council and the board of Garland Summer Musicals.

He has been married to Barbara for 41 years, and they have two daughters and three grandchildren. One of their hobbies is researching and photographing the remaining Carnegie Libraries. When they began ten years ago, they thought that the project wouldn't take long to complete. They have since learned, however, that there are approximately 1,400 libraries still standing, in 49 states, and have photographed about 300 so far.

Laurie Johnson, appointed by Commissioner Ken Mayfield, is a native Texan and senior product marketing manager at AT&T, where she has worked for 19 years. She and her family have long had ties to the cities of Dallas and Grand Prairie. Her great-great grandfather, C.O. Brewer, was

the first Dallas police officer to be killed in the line of duty, in 1892. Every May, her family attends the Dallas Police Officer's Memorial Service to honor the memory of slain officers.

Johnson attended Texas A&M University and received a degree in business management from Dallas Baptist University. She is a member of the Grand Prairie Soproptimist Club and Matthew Road Baptist Church.

She and her husband, Wayne, have two daughters. She is involved in the South Grand Prairie High School and Ouachita Baptist University soccer booster clubs as a true soccer mom.

Wheelize (Pete) Wilson, Jr., appointed by Commissioner Ken Mayfield, is a life-long resident of Coppell and Dallas County. He was a managing director of Dallas Repertory Theatre for 18 years and is now artistic director of Theatre Coppell. He has directed over 250 plays in his career – everything from Romeo and Juliet to Annie.

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Wheatland Cemetery Marker *(Continued from page 1)*

including some who were reinterred from the Wesley Chapel burial ground. Burials here include area pioneers, farmers, community leaders, and victims of flu, malaria, and diphtheria epidemics. The

cemetery contains fraternal organization grave stones, vertical stones, and curbing.

In 1913, the Uhl and Branson families deeded additional acreage. The Methodist

Episcopal Church South at Wheatland also conveyed land that year. The Wheatland Cemetery Association, which family members of the interred organized in 1908, continues to maintain the burial ground.



The Wheatland Church, which was completed in 1859, is an example of Prairie Style architecture.

DCHC Board Meeting

The next meeting of the DCHC Board will be Thursday, August 13, 2009, at noon at the Commissioners Court
411 Elm Street, Dallas.

Details will be posted on the DCHC website at
www.dallaschc.org

Texas Left With No Right to Secede

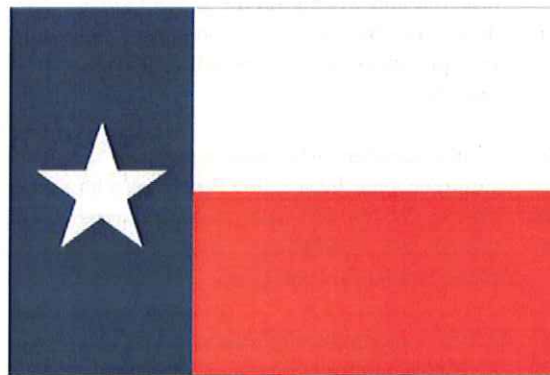
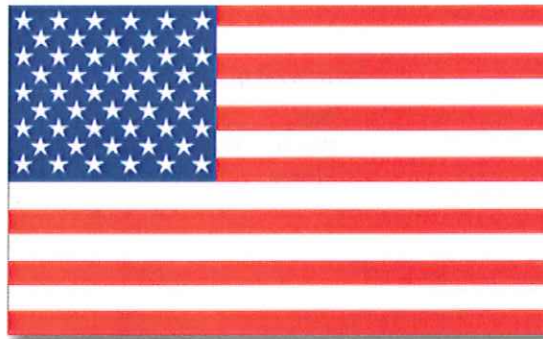
By Bob Reagan

During recent events, some prominent individuals voiced the opinion that that it might be in Texas's best interest to secede from the United States and become an independent nation. There are those who have gone so far to suggest that Texas, alone among the states, has the express legal right to secede and has had that legal right since its admission to the Union in 1845. That assertion is incorrect; the facts can be discovered by reading the documents that made Texas a state, documents available to anyone who wishes to read them.

Many leaders of the 1836 Texas Revolution wanted to become part of the United States immediately after the revolution. Sam Houston, who had been a friend and protégé of then-President Andrew Jackson, was a staunch advocate. One reason this did not happen immediately was that the newly independent Republic of Texas permitted and protected slavery and would have been (and later was) admitted as a cotton-growing slave state. Texas becoming a state in 1836 would have upset the balance of power on the slavery and tariff issues in Congress. Furthermore, Mexico, though not officially pursuing military operations after San Jacinto, continued to refuse to recognize Texas independence throughout the next decade. Annexation thus would have put the United States in an awkward diplomatic position.

These political realities, which precluded statehood for Texas at the time *de facto* independence was won and during the remainder of the 1830s, began to change in the early 1840s. The Texas Congress had passed a resolution claiming land west to California as part of Texas, not an entire-

ly illogical position given the uncertain definition of Texas's boundaries. This claim, coupled with recognition of Texas by Great Britain and France, roused fears that Britain would gain inordinate influence on the entire Pacific coast if the United States did not acquire Texas as a state or at least as a territory.



In late 1843, President John Tyler opened negotiations with Texas through his Secretary of State, Abel Parker Upshur. While the negotiations were in progress, Upshur was killed in an explosion aboard the U.S.S. Princeton during a cruise on the Potomac River. Nevertheless, on April 12, 1844, Texan emissaries Isaac Van Zandt and J. Pinckney Henderson signed a treaty of annexation with Upshur's successor, John C. Calhoun, whereby Texas would become a territory – not a state – of the United States. This treaty made no

provision for subsequent secession, or, for that matter, the division into up to four states at Texas's option. Nevertheless, on June 8, 1844, northern anti-slavery men, joined by Southerners who wanted full, immediate statehood, caused the US Senate to refuse ratification. Because there was also some doubt about public opinion on the issue and a national election was forthcoming, the treaty became a dead letter.

The 1844 election of President James Polk, an avid expansionist and friend of Houston, revived the prospect for annexation. A new annexation proposal, this time in the form of a joint resolution requiring a simple majority of each House, rather than a treaty, was placed before Congress and approved on March 1, 1845. This resolution contained provisions that Texas was to be admitted directly as a state, retain title to its public lands, and, upon exercising its option at any time in the future, to divide itself into as many as four states. Nowhere in the Congressional Resolution, or in the June 23, 1845, Texas Joint Resolution accepting statehood under those terms, was the right of secession mentioned. Texas, therefore, had and has no express legal basis for secession.

Most Constitutional scholars and historians maintain that any implied right was extinguished by the Union victory in the Civil War. Thus, there is no present legal authority for Texas, or any other state, to secede from the Union.

Bob Reagan is an attorney with Reagan & McLain, a civil litigation law firm, in Dallas.

Join the Friends of the DCHC

The Friends of the Dallas County Historical Commission is a Section 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. The mission of the Friends is to provide private funding support for Texas historical markers and other educational programs sponsored by the DCHC and to raise awareness of the history of Dallas County and its cities, neighborhoods and communities.

Your membership contribution is tax deductible as allowed by law. The Friends has no paid staff. As a result, all of your contributions support DCHC activities except for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in operating the Friends. All members receive a copy of *The Dallas County Chronicle* and invitations to the Friends annual meeting and other events. To join, complete the following information, pick a membership level and send your check, payable to the Friends of the Dallas County Historical Commission, to:

Charlene Orr
Historic Mesquite, Inc./City of Mesquite
Box 850137
Mesquite, Texas 75185-0137

Charter memberships

(limited to contributors who joined by
December 31, 2006) will be valid
until December 31, 2009.

For information, call Charlene Orr
at (972) 216-6468.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Membership Level: _____

Membership Levels

Basic \$35
Big D \$100
Pioneer \$500

New DCHC Members (Continued from page 2)

Wilson was a member of the first graduating class of Coppell High School in 1965, and he received his bachelor's and master's degrees from North Texas State University, with graduate work at SMU School of Law. For 36 years, he taught drama and speech at Coppell High School and was chairman of the fine arts department until he retired last year.

Wilson became interested in the history of his hometown when he was a senior

in high school and has done extensive research and writing on the subject since then. He has served as president and vice-president of the Coppell Historical Society.

Linda Zander, who was appointed by Commissioner John Wiley Price, owns an interior design firm that provides home design and remodeling services in the Plano and North Dallas area.

Zander is a graduate of Southern Vermont University with a BS in business manage-

ment. She maintains her membership in the American Society of Interior Designers.

Her community involvements include serving as chair of the Keep Desoto Beautiful Board, Board of Director and historian for Concerned DeSoto Citizens and a board director for the Desoto Chamber of Commerce. She chairs the Chamber's annual fund-raiser, the Annual Awards Gala, and also serves on the Board of Directors for Leadership Southwest.

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The Dallas County Historical Commission is a county board appointed by the Dallas County Commissioners Court. *The Dallas County Chronicle* is a publication of the DCHC for historical groups in Dallas County and the general public. This issue was edited by Ann Spillman and Rick Loessberg and was published with the assistance of The Sixth Floor Museum. Articles should be sent to Ann Spillman at acspillman@sbcglobal.net or by mail to the Dallas County Historical Commission, 411 Elm Street, 3rd Floor, Dallas, TX 75202-3301. Visit the DCHC on the web at www.dallaschc.org.

