



DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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Dallas County's Time Machine

By Charles Stokes



Photo: Todd Toney

Skylines around the world create a landmark horizon with towering skyscrapers. While the Dallas skyline has a modern persona, it has a unique historical building that really stands out. One of my earliest memories of Dallas was an occasion in which I visited downtown with my dad. Upon emerging from the parking garage, I saw the historic Dallas County Courthouse and asked, "Whose castle is this?" Even at that time in my

life, visiting the Courthouse, nicknamed "Old Red," seemed like going back in time.

I recently revisited Old Red in a very special way. As a member of the Dallas County Historical Commission and as part of a recent survey for the Texas Historical Commission, I climbed to the top of its clock tower to photograph some of the surrounding buildings. What I found inside was spectacular. Luckily, Todd Toney, band director at North Garland High

School and an excellent photographer, agreed to accompany me to help take pictures.

We climbed through the huge attic and up the old stairs to the clock tower area. Once inside, we had an unbeatable view of downtown. Luckily, we were escorted by Don Henjum, a Dallas County employee who is the lead building mechanic and does preventative maintenance to the clock tower. He took us into the mechanism room on top, where I was surprised to see a



Photo: Charles Stokes

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Dallas County's Time Machine (Continued)

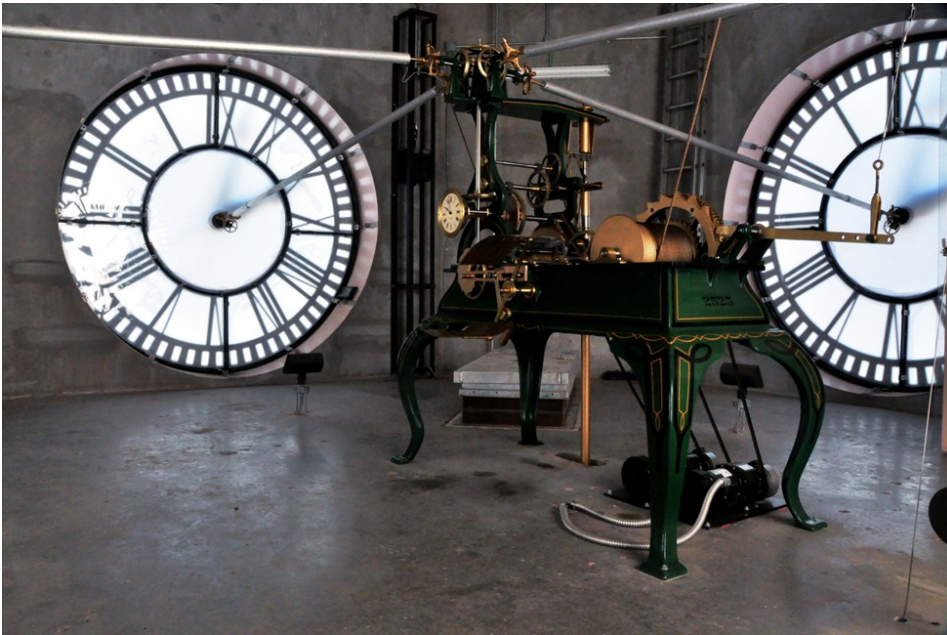


Photo: Todd Toney

fully functional historical mechanism in operation. This is when my interest in the history of Old Red was really piqued. After doing some research, I discovered a rich history of Dallas deeply intertwined with that of the Courthouse and an inside look into the care that the County has taken to preserve the building.



Photo: Todd Toney

Old Red, completed in 1892, is actually Dallas County's sixth courthouse. The first, a log structure, was built in 1846.

Some of the early courthouses burned. Old Red is an example of Richardsonian Romanesque Architecture and is built from red sandstone and blue granite. It was constructed at an original cost of \$300,000, a very high price for its time.

Due to structural concerns, the clock tower was demolished in 1919. The bell was cut into pieces and the original mechanism was destroyed. Old Red continued to be used as a courthouse, and the building underwent several restorations through the years.

In 2007, a new clock tower was completed. Essence of Time, a New York-based clock tower restoration company, performed much of the project, which was the largest restoration of its

kind in 50 years. A historic E. Howard clock mechanism of the same make and model as the original was found in Massachusetts, restored, and raised into the new clock tower. A new bell was made in Belgium and shipped to Dallas. New faces for the clock were fabricated from stainless steel and an autowind mechanism was added. The clock keeps time within one minute every six months due to a temperature-compensating pendulum. Don Henjum performs preventative maintenance on the clock as needed, and Essence of Time travels from New York every six months to oil and adjust the mechanism.

Old Red opened as a museum in 2007. The building is a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Photo: Charles Stokes

Women's Equality Day

Dallas County Historical Commission members Sherry Peel (left) and Chair Ann Spillman (right) and Susybelle L. Gosslee, President of the Women's Issues Network, attended the Women's Equality Day Celebration on August 24. The event, sponsored by the Women's Issues Network and the League of Women Voters of Dallas, commemorated the 91st anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, which gave American women the right to vote.



DCHC Member Profiles

Dallas County Historical Commission members are volunteers appointed by the Dallas County Commissioners Court for two-year terms. They serve as the first level of review for state historical markers, 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, Joseph Bruegger, Gloria M. Carrillo and Sherry Peel, have served in a variety of Dallas County civic organizations.

Joseph Bruegger was appointed by Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins. He is a partner in the law firm of Bruegger & McCullough, P.C. and has lived in Dallas for more than 30 years. Bruegger is a member of the Texas Historical Commission, the Dallas Historical Society, the Dallas Bar Association, the YMCA and Good Shepherd Episcopal Church. He and his wife, Judi, have three children.

Gloria M. Carrillo was appointed by Dallas County Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia. She is a general liability case manager for Legal Center Jose Angel Gutierrez. She has a bachelor's degree from Dallas Baptist College and is an MBA candidate at Dallas Baptist University. Carrillo is a founding member of Grand Prairie's Cinco de Mayo Celebration, the recipient of a Ford Foundation Hispanic Salute for

Volunteer Work and a YMCA Volunteer of the Year. She is the past chair of the Grand Prairie Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and a member of St. Michael's Catholic Church.

Sherry Peel was appointed by Dallas County Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia. She runs Leep Trading Company, which specializes in online retail of Mexican folk art. She has a degree in social work from the University of Texas at Austin and serves as vice president of neighborhoods for the Old Oak Cliff Conservation League. Peel is also a member of the Dallas Historical Society and Oak Cliff Lion's Club and serves as co-president of the Dallas Theater Center Guild.

Featured Landmark

*White Rock Pump
Station*



The White Rock Pump Station was built in 1911 to supply added water for the City of Dallas in response to its growing population and extended droughts in the early 1900s. The Renaissance Revival building, located at 2900 White Rock Road, features corbelled brick and terra cotta details. It is currently used as the Water Operations Control Center of the Dallas Water Utilities.

The Dallas County Chronicle is going electronic.

The Chronicle will soon be available to subscribers by email for easy and convenient viewing. To receive issues electronically, please provide your email address to Rick Loessberg at rloessberg@dallascounty.org or 214-653-7601 by November 1.



The Dallas County Chronicle

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.dallascounty.org.