

THE *County Chronicle*

NEWSLETTER OF THE DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION



Winter 1996

DALLAS COUNTY CELEBRATES ITS SESQUICENTENNIAL

By Dallas County Judge Lee Jackson

The State of Texas has had its Sesquicentennial of independence and, in 1996, we will also be commemorating its Sesquicentennial of statehood. In Dallas, we will be joining this year's celebration with our own activities, marking Dallas County's 150 years of existence.

In the first year of statehood, Dallas County was created officially by the new Texas Legislature on March 30, 1896. Throughout the year of 1996, a series of special events will be held to remind us of our community's history and progress.

Almost from the beginning, Dallas County grew in a more diversified way than many other Texas counties. We developed many small towns, not a dominant city. Our residents came from many nationalities and brought many crafts, occupations and professions to the growing Dallas County economy. We were a diversified marketplace relying on trade and transportation in addition to local agriculture and manufacturing.

In 1996, we are more aware than ever before of our diversity, but we sometimes lose sight of the common threads which tie us together as citizens of a single community. The success of our schools, our health care, transportation and justice

systems, and the continued health of our economy depend on our ability to respect and support each other and to make the very best individual contributions to our community that we can.

That's why it is valuable on an occasion like the Sesquicentennial to remember our history and remind ourselves of common ties. It is a time to value community traditions and to acknowledge the families, businesses, churches and other groups who have been a part of Dallas County for so long and to acknowledge new participants in our community's progress.

A Sesquicentennial Committee of hardworking volunteers is planning events for all the residents of Dallas County. They are counting on you to spread the word about our year-long celebration and to volunteer if you can. A special Sesquicentennial "hot line" has been established which you can reach at 653-7278 for more information.

I hope you will join the Sesquicentennial Committee and be a part of the community activities in this remarkable year.

CHAIR'S REPORT

As the Historical Commission worked with students at Madison High School to research an historical marker, we became quite alarmed at the lack of documentation in the records that we perused. It caused such great consternation that the Commission will publish a tri-fold to encourage organizations, businesses, etc. to name a historian to document their history from the beginning and keep it updated. We cannot overemphasize the importance of recording history.

We need this information to understand people and other times and to draw lessons from those times as guides for decisions and policies for today.

Historians will use the information which is compiled as sources for research. The scarcity of sources is a great problem for historians, whose work resembles that of a detective. Many of the activities and thoughts of ordinary people, plus other useful data were never recorded and much that was written has been lost or destroyed through the years.

Today, historians are having to rely on the writings of only a few people and frequently, these writings are a mere fragment of information on which to base a reconstruction of the past.

We encourage everyone to be a part of a "historical preservation army" and tell as many people as possible about the importance of recording their history through written and/or photographic means.

Pat Randolph, a former member of the Dallas County Historical Commission, (and a good one) is conducting workshops at Dallas County Community College District campuses explaining to people how they can tell their story.

These workshops are scheduled through the Continuing Education Department and they can be contacted for schedules.

Meantime, Mrs. Randolph has published a book, *Once Upon A Memory*, which can be purchased for ten dollars (\$10.00) from Randolph Publishing Company, P. O. Box 35284, Dallas, Texas 75235. This book helps you document what has happened in your family.

If you are interested in this program, write the Dallas County Historical Commission, 411 Elm Street, Dallas, Texas 75202 for further information.

Let's make a difference for future generations
DOCUMENT YOUR STORY!!!

Jean Sims

AN HISTORICAL MARKER REQUEST

By Students at Madison High School

Official Texas historical markers are popular and useful tools for promoting and preserving all aspects of Texas' rich heritage. Over the years a variety of topics, including persons, events, institutions, buildings, festivals, ethnic groups and communities have been marked.

Our group, Group Four, of the Travel and Tourism class at Madison High School feel that the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce should receive an official Texas historical marker. The organization dates back to the twenties. It has helped to establish some of the first African American businesses in Dallas, Texas. Some of these African American Entrepreneurs have made significant contributions to Dallas. A. Maceo Smith was one of the Executive Directors. There is a school and federal building named for him. There were others such as A. Braswell, J. H. Glen and Sam Hudson, Sr. (Editor's Note: former City Councilman and Justice of the Peace, George Allen, should be added to the list.)

We have visited the Black Chamber and attended their luncheon which honors successful entrepreneurs. It gave us an opportunity to see real life people who were making a difference. We are looking forward to other activities which will teach us about our community and how it developed from the past to the present.

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THE *County Chronicle*

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Editor-in-Chief Kay Tiller
Material, including scheduled events, is solicited from other Dallas County historical groups and will be used in the DCHC Calendar in each issue.

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE BRANCH

The City of Farmers Branch, Texas celebrates its 50th Anniversary as an incorporated city in 1996. The Anniversary celebration is slated to begin with a special ceremony on Saturday, April 13, 1996 at City Hall Plaza, 13000 William Dodson Parkway, Farmers Branch. Various special activities will continue throughout the year. Although Farmers Branch was incorporated in April of 1946, it was founded more than 150 years ago as part of Peter's Colony.

The Heritage Education Committee of Farmers Branch recently completed a pictorial history of the city. To order a copy of the 50th Anniversary commemorative book, Farmers Branch Texas - A Pictorial History, please call the Historical Park at 406-0184. Books are \$25, tax included.

The annual meeting of the Texas Association of Museums will be held in Dallas April 10-13. One of the opening events will be hosted by the Farmers Branch Historical Park on April 10th. Beginning at 7 p.m., the Association members will enjoy an old fashioned barbecue, short vignettes appropriate to each building performed by Park docents, as well as other entertainment.

Jackie Deaton

DCHC MEMBERS VERY ACTIVE IN SESQUICENTENNIAL PROGRAMS

Starting with DCHC Chair Jean Sims heading up the committee to bring Dallas County history into perspective for the Sesquicentennial, many of the Dallas County Historical Commission members are very busy working with former DCHC Chair, John Crain (now chair of the Sesquicentennial Committee), on various aspects of the year-long celebration.

Mary Katherine Maddox is working with former DCHC Chair, Lindalyn Adams on the Opening Celebration on April 20th. Kay Tiller is handling public relations for the entire Sesquicentennial and Jackie Deaton is on the overall committee, among others.

It is most interesting to see how many past members of the DCHC are active in these events, Ruthe Jackson, a former DCHC member, is vice chair of the committee; Helen Jankowski, a former DCHC chair is working with Winnifred Stokes, another former member, on getting other historical organizations involved in the festivities and the list goes on. . . (afraid I'll leave someone out, so I'll just say etc.)

Kay Tiller

Jackie Deaton Reports on . . .

THE AMERICAN ASSN. FOR STATE & LOCAL HISTORY MEETING

I was one of several from Dallas County, primarily Farmers Branch, who attended the 55th annual meeting of the American Association for State and Local History which was held in Saratoga Springs, New York last year.

The theme for the meeting "Place, Past, Perspective: Local History and Communities" in essence explains what the meeting was all about. Those in attendance explored ways in which we interpret and help conserve the places in which we live and work, the relationships between past and present, our roles in bridging these worlds and the sense of perspective that our work as historians can bring to all such issues.

Due to my interest in education, I attended several of the workshops which addressed the idea of historic sites and museums working in partnership with schools to develop programs that create student participation. I came back with a good feeling because Farmers Branch is already doing many of the things that are being recommended.

BETTY THORNHILL HOSTS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

DCHC member Betty Thornhill of Rowlett gave a luncheon at Lakewood County Club for the Dallas County Historical Commission at Christmas time. It was in lieu of the December meeting.

Those members who had the pleasure of attending want to thank Betty again and to those who didn't make it, you certainly missed something really great.

Betty Thornton continues to "give" to the DCHC, she had the invitations to our 1994 Awards Luncheon printed for us gratis and is now doing the same with some of the printing for the Sesquicentennial. . . thanks for everything, Betty!

Kay Tiller

LLOYD HENDERSON VISITS GERMAN-TEXAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

"It was a delightful evening", Lloyd Henderson, vice chair of the DCHC reported about visiting with members of the German-Texan Heritage Society.

The German-Texan Heritage Society was founded in 1978 as a non-profit organization and has an international membership of over 1,100 people. The Society is actively engaged in the research of German-Texan history, preservation of the German legacy and the recognition of the German heritage in Texas.

Although GTHS has a special appeal to the descendants of all German-speaking people, it also provides a tremendous resource of information for researchers, educational institutions, genealogists, historians, biographers and librarians.

"I find it interesting that today one out of every five Texans has a German speaking ancestor," Henderson noted. "And I am quite impressed with the dedication this group has toward the preservation of their heritage."

The GTHS meets the third Thursday of each month at Crystal's Pizza and Spaghetti in Irving at 7:30 p.m. For further information, contact Eberhard (Ed) Herrman, P. O. Box 140012, Dallas, Texas 75214. Phone: 214/337-6233.

DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
411 ELM STREET
DALLAS, TEXAS 75202

COCHRAN CEMETERY MARKER DEDICATION

The Texas Historical Marker for Cochran Chapel Cemetery at 9027 Midway Road will be dedicated on Sunday, April 21, 1996 at 2.p.m.

It is of vital importance that Dallas County Historical Commission members be in attendance at these Marker Dedications just as often as possible. Please make your plans to attend this one.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS FOR THE

BARBEQUE LUNCH

AT THE OPENING CEREMONY,

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 1996

OLD RED COURTHOUSE

363-9000