



# THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

The Newsletter of the Dallas County Historical Commission

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## DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Rick Loessberg  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
411 ELM STREET, 3RD FLOOR  
DALLAS, TX 75202-3301  
214-653-7601

## Historical Commission Forges Ahead in 2001

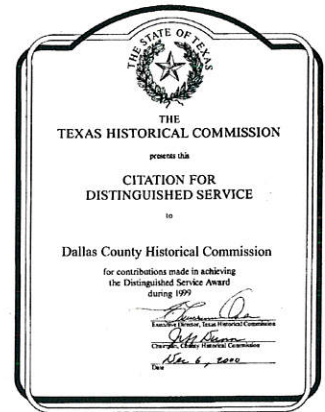
By Jeff Dunn, DCHC Chairman

The objective of the Dallas County Historical Commission is to advise the county commissioners court on matters pertaining to historical preservation in Dallas County and implement programs offered by the Texas Historical Commission. Although our members are appointed by the county commissioners court in accordance with county ordinances, the commission's existence and scope of work is largely determined by state law with the Texas Historical Commission playing a large and important advisory role. This arrangement presents challenges as well as opportunities.

I am pleased to report that the commission improved its performance record in 2000 and we look forward to an exciting year in 2001. After winning the prestigious Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Historical Commission in 1999, the commission dedicated itself to enhancing its programs in 2000. Last year the commission dedicated eight Of-

ficial Texas Historical Markers, including First Baptist Church of Farmers Branch, United Methodist Church of Dallas, Trezevant Calhoun Hawpe gravesite at Pioneer Cemetery, White Rock Chapel, Joffre-Gilbert House in Irving, Hensley Field, and the United Methodist Church of Oak Cliff. Unique dedication ceremonies at White Rock Chapel and Hensley Field are featured in this issue of the County Chronicle.

The commission is continuing its outreach efforts to encourage "partnering" among the county's historical organizations and municipalities. The commis-



sion sponsored "historical summit" was held on October 24, 2000 at Belo Mansion. Over 25 organizations and municipalities were represented at that event. The program featured Frances James on the Texas Histori-  
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### Upcoming Events:

#### Marker Dedications

March 17: Ross Ave. Baptist Church (East Dallas)

March 27: Trees Cemetery (Duncanville)

#### Dallas Historical Society Tours

April 14: Bonnie & Clyde Tour (John Neal Phillips)

April 28: Oak Cliff Tour (Darwin Payne)

May 12: Cemetery Tour (Frances James)

May 19: Downtown Tour

June 19: Fair Park & East Dallas Tour (Darwin Payne)



# Marker Dedication at White Rock Chapel in Addison Draws Large Crowd

By Buddy Frazer, DCHC Member

A cold breeze didn't chill the enthusiasm of the crowd that gathered on October 8, 2000, for the dedication of the Texas Historical Marker at White Rock Chapel in Addison. White Rock Chapel is a predominately African-American church and is the only church located in the Addison city limits.



The White Rock Chapel was first built in the former freedman community by former slaves on White Rock Creek in 1884. The first building was a log building adjacent to an African-American cemetery. In 1918 flooding forced the church to move to its current site on Celestial Road. The site was donated by S. S. Noel. The current building was built in 1981.



The White Rock Chapel marker was unveiled by Pastor B. J. Forward, Addison Mayor Scott Wheeler and DCHC Chairman Jeff Dunn.



Attending the dedication were (R to L) DCHC representatives Jeff Dunn, Buddy Frazer & Barbara Steele, Town of Addison organizer Andy Eads, Addison Mayor Scott Wheeler, White Rock Chapel Pastor B. J. Forward, Mrs. Forward, Elder Darren McCoy.

The ceremony featured officials from the church and the Town of Addison. Speakers included White Rock Chapel Pastor B. J. Forward and Addison Mayor R. Scott Wheeler. Festivities began with songs by the Choir and lunch for the some 100 people gathered on the Chapel lawn. Following Pastor

Forward's invocation, Elder H. Grant read the scripture and Sister Mary Frances Moody Forward, a member of one of the church's founding families gave a welcome. Selections of hymns were lead by Elder Darren McCoy and Evangelist Murlee Grant. Andy Eads coordinated the event for the Town and spoke on the efforts to obtain the marker designation. Dallas County Historical Commission Chairman Jeff

Dunn spoke about the marker approval process. The speeches were followed by closing remarks and a closing prayer by Sister Toni McCoy and Elder Grant. The marker inscription was read by Brother Elbert Winn, who is also a member of one of the church's founding families.

White Rock Chapel is the second State Historical Marker in Addison. The other is at the old Addison State Bank building off Addison Road north of Belt Line.





# Historical Commission Sponsors “Gathering at Grape Vine Springs” in Coppell

By Jon Eric Simmons, DCHC Member

Saturday, September 23, 2000 the Dallas County Historical Commission (DCHC) sponsored the “Gathering at Grape Vine Springs” to commemorate the 1843 visit to the site by then President of the Republic of Texas, Sam Houston. “Old Sam” had come to the area to negotiate a “Treaty of Peace and Friendship” with local Native American Indian Tribes in order to hasten the settlement of our North Texas region.

Even though Houston failed to meet with the Tribes at this location (the creek had risen with recent storms and the Tribes’ representatives could not cross) and returned south to other duties, his Commissioners traveled on and eventually met with the Tribes’ representatives at Bird’s Fort and obtained the desired treaty.

Houston’s campsite for several days at the Grape Vine Springs site became a matter of local legend and in 1936, the family that owned the springs and surrounding land dedicated the site to Dallas County as a Centennial Park. The Civilian Conservation Corps made considerable improvements including rock entry columns, picnic areas and walking paths. Subsequently Dallas County transferred it to the State of Texas and it eventually was forgotten and reverted to private ownership until the early

1990’s when the Baptist Foundation of Texas donated the springs and approximately 14 acres of the historical site to Dallas County who cleaned up and restored the park and leased it for one-dollar a year to the City of Coppell for an Open Space and Historical Park.

The “Gathering at Grape Vine Springs” was centered on an exhibit of historical artworks by Dallas area artist Marjorie Jones from her “Spirit of Dallas” collection and historical players from the Texana Living History Association playing the parts of Sam Houston and guide Luiz Sanchez. The main piece on exhibit was “Sam Houston at the Grape Vine Spring” an historical painting depicting Houston and members of his party at the campsite in August of 1843. This work was also on display in the main lobby of the Coppell City Hall for a week before the event and in the historical display area of the Coppell Library for a month following the event.

Sponsors of the event were, in addition to the DCHC, the City of Coppell Leisure Services, Texana Living History Association, Spirit of Dallas, North



Event attendees are shown around Marjorie Jones’s painting “Sam Houston at Grape Vine springs”. Left to right are DCHC member Jon Eric Simmons with his daughter Laure, Bob Welch as Sam Houston, Irving Heritage Society member Jim Dunkley, and David Gutierrez as Houston’s guide Luiz.

Texas Mountain Valley Water, AFE Oil & Gas Consultants and the Equest Center. In addition numerous citizens from Coppell participated in the planning for the event and special efforts were made by Coppell Mayor Candy Sheehan and Coppell Councilwoman Jayne Peters to insure the success of the event.

It is hoped that in future years the event can include such things as a full set up of a camp for that period and exhibits by Native Americans highlighting some of the culture of this area before and immediately following the arrival of Anglo-American settlers in North Texas.

## Carrollton Volunteer’s Clean Cemetery

By Jon Eric Simmons, DCHC member

The Dallas County Historical Commission (DCHC) was a co-sponsor for the Carrollton Volunteer Day project to continue the cleaning and upkeep of Carrollton’s historic Black Cemetery, now known as the Carrollton Community Cemetery. Numerous volunteers from the community came out on a beautiful June morning to clean and tell sto-

ries about some of the pioneers buried there.

Members of a number of early pioneer African American families, including the Bush-Chapman and Rainwater families participated in the event. They told stories of the farms and houses that once existed

in the bottomland area of the Elm Fork of the Trinity River.

The DCHC raised funds from Western Extrusion, a local manufacturing firm, to pay for a new sign denoting the Cemetery.



# Historical Marker Dedicated at Hensley Field in Memorial Day Ceremony

By Buddy Frazer, DCHC Member

Congressman Martin Frost led a dedication of civic leaders at the dedication of a Historical Marker for Hensley Field at the Naval Air Station Dallas. The event was held on Memorial Day, November 11.



Congressman Martin Frost at the Hensley Field Marker Dedication.

The site was originally purchased by the City of Dallas in 1928 and leased it to the U.S. Army for a training airfield. The field was named for Major William N. Hensley, an Air Officer for the Eighth Corps Army Area who helped select the base site. Army Air operations were moved to Hensley from Love Field. The U.S. War Department granted the use of a part of the field to the Navy in 1941. In 1943 the field was designated as the Dallas Naval Air Station. Personnel trained there during

World War II included the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Marine pilots, three future astronauts, a French force, and Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES). In 1944 the facility was re-tooled to produce B-24 Bombers. After the War, the Naval Air Training Program was located at Hensley. The Navy officially took over operation of the Field on May 1, 1949. The Dallas Naval Air Station remained in operation until 1998.

In addition to Congressman Frost, participants included Buddy Boren, who lead the campaign for marker approval, Dallas City Council member VeLetta Lill, who read a proclamation from Mayor Ron Kirk, Grand Prairie City Council member Ruthe Jackson,



Buddy Boren hosted the dedication ceremony.



Mr. Boren and Congressman Frost unveil the Hensley Field Marker.

and Dallas County Historical Commission Chairman Jeff Dunn. The event was highlighted by a flyover a C-130 and a formation of F-18s from the 136<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing at Carswell Field, Ft. Worth.



Dallas County Historical Commission member Joyce Hicks and her husband, Texas State Guard LTC Joe Hicks, attended the dedication.

## Commission in 2001

*(Continued from page 1)*

cal Commission's new cemetery historical designation program, commission member Mike Hayslip on the historical marker program, and Mike Coker, who spoke on his completed Phase II of the county historical resources survey.

The commission continues to stay interested in developments pertaining to the restoration of Old Red Courthouse, the improvement of the County Historical Plaza and other issues of interest to the commissioners court.

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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 quarterly publication of the DCHC for historical groups in Dallas County and the general public. This edition was edited by Buddy Frazer and published with the assistance of The Sixth Floor Museum. Contributions should be sent to Jeff Dunn, via email at [jddunn@flash.net](mailto:jddunn@flash.net), or by mail to Dallas County Historical Commission, 411 Elm Street, 3rd Floor, Dallas, TX 75202-3301.