

The County Chronicle

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OLD RED BECOMING ALIVE AGAIN

As the \$1.6 million restoration of the main hall and northwest quadrant of Old Red nears completion, several other initiatives related to the grand old building are gaining momentum. The activity is being coordinated by the seven-member Old Red Foundation that has been granted a leasehold interest in the building by the County and a mandate to develop it as a museum and a public space.

The first order of business for the Foundation, which is chaired by David Biegler of Texas Utilities Company, was to select a nationally-prominent consulting firm to program a core exhibit and coordinate a vision for the building. With the help of a selection committee of fifteen interested citizens, the Foundation has engaged Staples and Charles, whose other credits include The Sixth Floor Museum and Coca-Cola Atlanta, among others. Barbara Charles leads the team which also includes Conover Hunt, Mike Hazel, and Jackie McElhane.

The County Budget Office has submitted grant applications to several foundations for the initial seed money for the study. Friends of Old Red and the Dallas County Sesquicentennial Committee have already made key contributions that have enabled the work to begin even before the grants are considered. Barbara Charles and her team have already spent three days in Dallas meeting with community leaders and others concerned with the appropriate use of Old Red.

Another exciting development involves the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau, who is proposing to lease approximately 25% of the ground floor for a well-appointed, seven-day-a-week downtown visitor center. This operation will be carefully integrated with the Museum, bookstore and other building uses, and can be operational within four months of approval. A visitor center can account for up to 200,000 visits per year to the building, and ultimately be a draw to help museum attendance. The Commissioners Court has placed \$445,000 in the FY98 capital budget to accommodate finish-out.

Once the building modifications are complete (on or about Thanksgiving), the grand hall can begin to accommodate certain functions such as meetings and receptions. The current improvements will make the elevators, HVAC, handicap access, and lighting compatible with expanded building use. The Commissioners Court is also considering relocating the three Probate Courts to the fourth floor for an indefinite period of time until the Museum feels the need to expand from the lower floors.

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OLD RED BECOMING ALIVE AGAIN

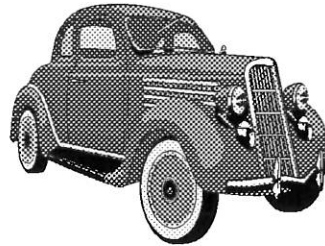
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Finally, the Foundation Board, which consists of Lindalyn Adams, Jim Erwin, Raymond Basye, Dr. Charles Tandy, Pryor Blackwell, Don Buchholz, and David Biegler, is in the process of appointing a permanent advisory board to work with Barbara Charles and her team to design the museum. This group will also assist in the structuring of the large committee fund-raising effort that will ultimately be required.

Historical Commission Member Crosses Country in the Great Race

Showing that history appreciation extends far beyond the simple viewing of an old building, DCHC member Bob Harris has just completed the MBNA "Great Race" in a 1928 Hudson "Super Six" Sport Roadster. The race was from Sonoma, California to Jacksonville, Florida in 14 days and 4600 miles in authentic pre-1950 automobiles. Harris has owned the classic Hudson for two years and had rebuilt the engine and several other parts on the 70-year-old automobile.

The race crossed the Rocky Mountains, the deserts of the West and the heat of the South, passing through 39 cities and fifteen states before reaching Jacksonville, Florida on the 4th of July. An estimated 250,000 people saw the race. Harris and his crew finished 10th in their class, but more importantly kept the Hudson running the 4600 miles to finish the race. As Bob said, "A lot of parts vibrate loose and bounce off at very inconvenient times."

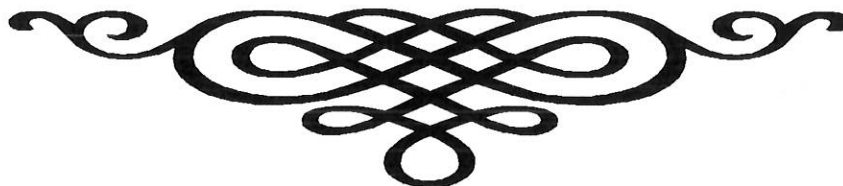


The "Great Race" has crossed the country each summer for the last fifteen years in a timed, endurance road rally. Entrants from all U.S. states and

England, Germany, Canada, Mexico, Australia, Japan and other countries have entered the race. Most cars are pre-1943, and if there is a tie, "the oldest car wins."

"The experience of recreating a cross country trip in the 20's is exciting. No air conditioning, no power steering and only mechanical brakes and a three-speed transmission make the race a challenge," says Bob. "It takes a steady driver, an alert navigator and a well-maintained car to finish."

This is Harris' second great race; he navigated with a friend in 1995 from Ottawa, Canada to Mexico City with an overnight stop in Dallas' West End.



Historical Markers 2000 Project

Having received a grant of \$337,931 from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the Texas Historical Commission is presently surveying and making necessary repairs to many of the 11,500 Official Texas Historical Markers in Texas.

This effort, which is known as Historical Markers 2000 Project, has three main objectives: (1) the creation of a computer database containing information, text and photographs on every Official Texas Historical Marker; (2) the repair of historical markers which due to age, weathering or vandalism are no longer legible; and, (3) the publication of seven regional historical marker guidebooks.

Ruben Ochoa, Historical Marker 2000 Project Director, and his team from the Texas Historical Commission have been working in Dallas County for the past several weeks locating and evaluating the condition of the Dallas County markers. According to Mr. Ochoa, there are about 250 historical markers in Dallas County, of which about 50 are in need of some degree of repair. His survey to date indicates that about 20% of the markers in Texas are in need of repair.



Chairman's Notes ***Lloyd Henderson***

When I was installed as Chairman of the DCHC, one of the first things I did was to write to all of the "historical" organizations in Dallas County and ask to be put on their newsletter mailing lists. I was interested in what was going on with local history buffs and preservationists throughout the County and thought this would be a good way of finding out. The response was great, and each month when I read these newsletters, I stand amazed at not only the volume of activities, but also the variety of projects taking place.

I also began receiving copies of letters transmitted between the Texas Historical Commission's preservation consultation staff

Using these survey forms and the files housed at THC's Austin offices, the Texas Historical Commission will develop and maintain the Official Texas Historical Marker 2000 computer data base which will become known as the Historic Sites Atlas. Information such as Texas archaeological sites, museums, Texas National Register Program sites and districts, county courthouses, and Main Street Programs will be made available to the general public via the Internet.

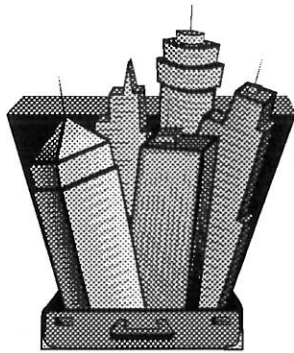
Markers in need of repair will be restored, repainted, and resealed to protect the exposed aluminum surfaces.

The Historic Marker 2000 Project will publish seven regional historical marker guidebooks containing infomaps, color photographs, and marker texts. These regional guidebooks will be placed at the Texas Department of Transportation's travel/visitor centers for distribution.



and owners of buildings and structures located in Dallas County. This correspondence mostly deals with an owner's interest and commitment towards preserving the historical and/or architectural integrity of his building. Many of these letters indicate the owners are merely inquiring about information and some are projects just getting started, while others are projects which have been going on for several months. Again, I stand amazed as several pieces of this correspondence come across my desk daily.

The bottom line is there much preservation work being done in Dallas County by many different people. I am very encouraged with this activity and will be using future *Chronicles* to share examples of these projects.



**DALLAS COUNTY
PROVIDES TAX
INCENTIVE FOR
THE
PRESERVATION OF
THE MAGNOLIA
BUILDING**

On September 23, the Dallas County Commissioners Court agreed to provide the Stevens Holtze Corporation with a ten-year tax abatement so that the historic Magnolia Building in Downtown Dallas can be renovated and converted into an executive hotel.

The Magnolia Building, which was built in 1921, was once the tallest building in Dallas and is perhaps the most readily recognizable historic structure in the Dallas area. In fact, the neon flying horse that is atop the structure has, in many ways, become the unofficial symbol of Dallas. The building, however, has been vacant for the last five years.

Under the terms of the tax abatement provided by the County, the site's current taxes will be frozen for ten years if the City of Dallas provides a comparable abatement and if Stevens Holtze spends at least \$24 million to renovate and convert the building by January 1, 2000.

Stevens Holtze anticipates starting work on the building in January 1998. When completed, the building will contain 330 hotel rooms, employ 100-150 people, and help complement the revitalization of downtown that is now beginning.

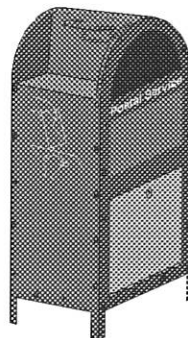
Stevens Holtze is a Denver-based corporation that develops and manages hotels. It recently renovated and converted an 85-year-old, twelve-story bank building in downtown Denver into a similar hotel. This hotel has been very successful financially, and Stevens Holtze has won awards from the Colorado Historical Society and Historic Denver Incorporated for the way that it renovated and preserved this building.

This abatement also represents the County's latest involvement in combining historic preservation and economic development. The County has previously provided abatements in the downtown area for such historic structures as the Joske's Building, the Adams Hat Building, 2220 Canton, and 3311 Elm which have been converted into housing. These abatements were integral to the renovation and preservation of these buildings which had all been vacant for at least a decade.

The housing produced by these abatements has, to date, been very successful. The Adams Hat Building, for instance, was at 85% occupancy within several months of its opening, and the Joske's Building, which is now known as Majestic Lofts, had about two-thirds of its units leased within one month of its opening.

***We're looking for Names
and Addresses***

As part of its effort to reach more people, the Dallas County Historical Commission is asking people to provide it with the names and addresses of as many local historical organizations as possible. The Historical Commission presently has over forty local organizations on its mailing list, but it believes that there are many more organizations in the County than these.



To be sure that an organization that you belong to or that you are aware of is on the Historical Commission's mailing list, please call Rick Loessberg, the County's Coordinator for Planning and Development, at (214) 653-7601 or send the information to Rick at 411 Elm Street, Dallas, Tx. 75202-3301.

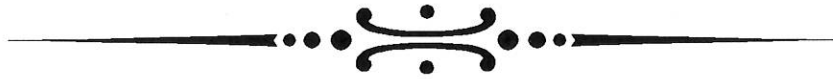
COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO HELP UNDERWRITE "LEGACIES"

The Dallas County Historical Commission will be providing \$2500 to help underwrite the publication costs of *Legacies* which is the only history journal devoted to Dallas and North Central Texas. Jointly published twice a year by the Dallas County Heritage Society, the Dallas Historical Society, and The Sixth Floor Museum, *Legacies* was created in 1989.

The Spring 1997 issue of *Legacies* was devoted to the history of newspapers and radio in Dallas. Its Fall 1997 issue will focus on area architecture.

Legacies currently has a circulation of about 2500. Copies are provided to members of the Historical Society and Heritage Society as part of their membership and are also available at Old City Park and The Sixth Floor Museum for \$5.

DCHC's participation in this journal will enable the County to reach hundreds of people on a regular basis and help ensure that a published record of the area's history will be kept.



COUNTY AWARDS CONTRACT FOR NEW HISTORICAL RESOURCE SURVEY

County will be included in another survey as soon as additional funding becomes available.

On October 14, the Dallas County Commissioners Court approved a \$32,760 contract to have a new County historical resource survey conducted. This survey will identify, photograph, and prioritize the significance of all historic structures located in the County's unincorporated area and in the fourteen following cities:

Sachse	Sunnyvale
Wilmer	Hutchins
Farmers Branch	Cockrell Hill
Balch Springs	University Park
Seagoville	Lancaster
Glenn Heights	Cedar Hill
Coppell	Rowlett

These cities have been selected for inclusion in the survey because they participate in the County's Community Development Block Grant program which is providing \$23,341 towards the project; the other funds that are budgeted for the survey are being provided by the County's Historical Commission. It is anticipated that the other cities in the

The survey will be conducted by the Michael R. Coker Company. Mike Coker, the company's president, was formerly the Planning Director for the City of Dallas, and as such, he was the City's Chief Historic Preservation Officer.

The County's last survey was conducted in 1982. The new survey, which should be completed in July 1998, will especially seek to identify those structures that were inadvertently overlooked during the last survey and those that have become historic during the last fifteen years. When completed, the survey will be used by governmental entities to help ensure that proposed capital improvements do not interfere with historic structures and to help create special zoning districts and preservation incentive programs. It will also be of assistance to people interested in a community's history and to developers who are interested in using federal historic preservation tax credits to renovate historic buildings.

The Dallas County Historical Commission is a county board of the Dallas County Commissioners Court. *The County Chronicle* is a regular quarterly publication of the DCHC, Administration Building, 411 Elm Street, Third Floor, Dallas, Texas 75202-3301.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you are moving, please notify the Commission of your new address. Call (214) 653-6714 or 653-7601, or write the DCHC at the address above.

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