



THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

The Newsletter of the Dallas County Historical Commission

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Old Red Courthouse Rededicated

By Charles Brown

A large crowd of dignitaries, invited guests and citizens gathered on Main Street on May 15 to formally recognize the rededication of the Old Red Courthouse and the dedication of the new Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture.

David Biegler, Chairman of the Old Red Museum Foundation Board; County Judge Jim Foster; and F. Lawrence Oaks, Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission, were among the speakers who recognized those involved in the restoration project. They cited the united efforts of architect James Pratt, Thos. S. Byrne General Contractors, the Old Red Museum Foundation and Old Red Museum Advisory boards, Museum Executive Director Dr. Tom Smith, the Dallas County Commissioners Court, generous donors and scores of volunteers who participated in the restoration project over years of painstaking work.

The first floor of the Romanesque-style Courthouse, which

was previously renovated, houses an information center. The second floor houses the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History and Culture, which has four major galleries and an education center.

The Hillcrest Foundation Early Years Gallery depicts the area's prehistory through 1873. The Trading Center Gallery highlights the economic opportunities that transformed Dallas County from 1874 to 1917.

The Ruth Ray and H.L. Hunt

Big "D" Gallery shows how Dallas gained national recognition and faced the challenges of a major metropolitan area from 1918 to 1945. The Linda and Mitch Hart World Crossroads Gallery shows how the Dallas area has identified new directions and reinvented itself since 1946.

The Crystal Charity Ball Children's Education Center is a high-tech interactive learning center that examines the daily lives of actual Dallas County children.

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Dignitaries cut the ribbon at the rededication of the Old Red Courthouse and dedication of the Old Red Museum.

High School Receives Subject Marker

A Subject Marker granted to Dallas' Lincoln High School by the Texas Historical Commission was dedicated in a ceremony at the original campus on March 25. Speakers included State Senator Royce West, Dallas City Councilman Leo Chaney, Jr., Dallas Independent School District Board member Ron Price, and Dallas County Historical Commission chair Melinda Thomas. DCHC members Jerome Sistrunk and Charles Powers also attended the dedication.

Lincoln High School was one of the largest DISD campuses when it opened in 1939 and was the second Dallas school for black students. The school was built on 11 acres, and half of its construction was paid for by a Federal Public Works Administration grant. Tueria Dell Marshall served as the first principal and saw the enrollment grow to more than 3,000 students in his 16 years as principal.

Former and current Lincoln High School students representing each decade since the school's opening were recognized. The dedication was coordinated by Myrtle Salone, a Lincoln graduate and career teacher.



Community leaders flank the newly dedicated Subject Marker at Lincoln High School in Dallas.



Charles Powers; Lindy Thomas, Chairman, DCHC; and Board member Jerome Sistrunk attend the Subject Marker dedication.

Old Red Courthouse

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The building's other floors contain offices, a courtroom, public space, and a large reception area.

Designed by M. A. Orlopp of Little Rock, Arkansas, the Courthouse opened in part in 1892 as the Commissioners Court and other county courts began to move in. By the 1980s, it was the last remaining 19th century public

building in Dallas County. Over the years, the building fell into disrepair, and there was once talk of tearing it down.

Today, the Old Red Courthouse stands as a testimony to Dallas County efforts to bring it new life, as reflected in the words of the event program, "In the heart of Dallas County a beloved landmark is restored and infused with new purpose."

DCHC Board Meeting

The next meeting of the DCHC Board will be Thursday, August 9, at noon in Lancaster. Members will tour the Rocky Crest School museum at the J.D. Hall Learning Center, which was once Lancaster's all-black high school.

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

Volunteers Come Together On The Rails

By Bob LaPrelle and Kellie Murphy

The Museum of the American Railroad, a 44-year-old institution at Fair Park, features impressive exhibits of massive locomotives and rail passenger cars from the 20th century. The museum relies heavily on volunteers to augment its three-person, full-time staff, and all have opportunities to participate in the organization's programming, educational outreach and on-going restoration projects. Individuals with a passion for history and preservation can pursue their interests at this unique museum.

This 44-year-old institution was the creation of Joseph Rucker, Jr., then assistant general manager of the State Fair of Texas, and Dallas oil man and philanthropist Everett DeGolyer, Jr. It has a cadre of volunteers who bring the historic trains to life in educational tours designed to immerse students in the life and culture of the 1920s to 1950s. The museum offers its visitors a unique opportunity to learn the effects of the railroad on a burgeoning young Dallas.

Volunteers' backgrounds include retired sports

medicine physicians, airline pilots and executives and electrical engineers, and young rail enthusiasts. A retired American Airlines executive serves on the museum's board, gives educational tours and assists with strategic planning and fundraising. The museum's longest-running volunteer started in 1976 and is now a national authority on the history and technology of Pullman sleeping cars. Its youngest volunteer is a 15-year-old student from Keller. The museum recently raised funds to send him to a summer camp to learn the fundamentals of operating vintage

steam trains on tourist railways.

A current museum project, the restoration of a 1925 Pullman sleeping car, benefits from the skills of two brothers, one retired from Texas Instruments and the other a retired quality inspector from Lockheed Martin. The air conditioning and electrical systems of the museum's rail cars receive expert attention from one its most active volunteers, who spent his career as a systems engineer at Honeywell.

Restoration isn't the only outlet for volunteer creativity at the museum. Volunteers participate as docents during regular business hours and special events like the museum's "Day Out With Thomas™." Opportunities exist for people who enjoy interacting with museum guests and introducing a new generation to the excitement of rail travel. Others enjoy showing off Amtrak's latest passenger cars during the annual State Fair of Texas.

Volunteers opportunities are available for organizations interested in making a difference in the com-

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Volunteers at the Museum of the American Railroad at Fair Park conduct tours for rail enthusiasts of all ages.

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Membership Level: _____

Membership Levels

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

Charter memberships

(limited to contributors who joined by December 31, 2006) will be valid until December 31, 2007.

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

Volunteers Come Together

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munity. The museum has benefited from several corporate volunteer projects, most recently those of Accenture and Southland Corporation. Thanks to the Southwest Airlines' Technology Group, the Cotton Belt Railway wooden ca-

boose has a new coat of red paint.

A unique volunteer position at the museum is that of calliopist. The museum's 1905 steam calliope from the Mississippi riverboat *Golden Rod* is played by a musically talented computer software engineer. The steam-powered instrument features 32 whistles controlled by a compact

brass keyboard. During the museum's popular event, "Dinner in the Diner," a retired Amtrak dining car steward greets guests attired in vintage eveningwear. Staff and volunteers recreate the ambiance and romance of dining in the grand manner.

The Museum of the American Railroad is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, with extended hours during special events and the State Fair. New volunteers receive an orientation and assistance from the volunteer coordinator, who matches their skills and interests with the museum's needs. Call 214-428-0101 for more information.

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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 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 via email 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 and the Dallas County government website at www.dallascounty.org.

Bob LaPrelle is president and CEO of the museum, and Kellie Murphy is director of public programs.