

THE *County Chronicle*

NEWSLETTER OF THE DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION



VOLUME XXV, NUMBER 2

SUMMER 1997

DANIEL WEBSTER GILBERT MARKER DEDICATION

On June 15, approximately 60 people gathered at the Sowers Cemetery in Irving to pay tribute to Dr. Daniel Webster Gilbert, M.D. Dr. Gilbert was born in 1854 and established his medical practice in Sowers, Texas in 1880. When Irving was founded in 1903, Dr. Gilbert moved his office to Irving proper and became the city's first family physician. He practiced in and around Irving until his death in 1930. Dr. Gilbert had a reputation of being a kind and compassionate physician who walked or traveled by buggy or horseback in all kinds of weather to Grapevine, Grand Prairie, Bear Creek, Union Bower, Elm, Hackberry, Estell, Shady Grove, and Kit at a time when there were no paved roads. Dr. Gilbert had four sons and four grandsons who became doctors.

Mayor Morris Parrish welcomed everyone to the dedication program, and Lloyd Henderson, Dallas County Historical Commission Chairman, congratulated the community and described the process by which a marker is obtained. Frances James, who worked with Dr. Clay Gilbert to obtain the marker, discussed the condition of the times during Dr. Gilbert's career. Anthony Bond, Past President, N.A.A.C.P., Irving Chapter, read a letter written at the time of Dr. Gilbert's death by one of Dr. Gilbert's patients telling of the great loss to the black community. A grandson, Dr. Clay Gilbert, unveiled the Texas Historical Marker honoring his grandfather.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Curtis Tunnell, Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission reports good news has come from the recent legislative session. The Legislature has provided additional money for the Preservation Trust Fund, and according to Tunnell, this means the THC will be able to double their grants program for brick and mortar projects around Texas. The THC also received some special funding for a military sites program, for the expansion of their Web site on the Internet, for a cemetery preservation coordinator, and for the conservation of the artifacts from the LaSalle shipwreck. "It is a good time for preserving our Texas heritage, and we want all County Historical Commissions to participate," says Tunnell.

TRIVIA

Next time you see a horse and rider in a park or on a courthouse lawn, remember this: If the horse has both front feet raised off the ground, the rider died in combat. If the horse has one foot raised off the ground, the rider died as a result of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four feet on the ground, the rider died of natural causes. (Source: Irving Genealogical Society newsletter, April, 1997)

DCHC Receives the Distinguished Service Award

During the 1997 Annual Historic preservation Conference, the Dallas County Historical Commission was one of only 28 counties out of 254 which was recognized as a recipient of the Texas Historical Commission's Distinguished Service Award (DSA). The purpose of the DSA is to recognize those preservation organizations and county historical commissions that carry out an active preservation program during the year.

To receive this award, a preservation group must complete specific requirements in at least three of eighteen categories offered by THC. The three categories chosen by DCHC included Organization, in which DCHC demonstrated its planning efforts; Heritage Education, with emphasis on the DCHC essay contest; and Publications, by producing The Chronicle newsletter on a quarterly basis.

Dallas County was also recognized as one of four counties who have participated in the DSA program for the first time in several years. Hidalgo County holds the record by receiving the DSA for twenty-four consecutive years. Hidalgo County also received the "Most In Attendance Award" with 24 people attending the conference. Dallas County was close with 18 people.

Laura Bush, wife of Governor George W. Bush, presented the Distinguished Service Award to Jean Sims, Past Chairwoman, who received the certificate on behalf of the Dallas County Historical Commission.

CONGRATULATIONS
. JEAN SIMS!!

Jean Sims, who is the Past Chairman of the Dallas County Historical Commission, received the John Ben Shepperd Leadership Award during the State awards luncheon at the 1997 Annual Historic Preservation Conference in Austin on May 29. This award recognizes county historical commission chairpersons who display outstanding leadership necessary to carry out an aggressive and well-balanced preservation program which is consistent with the state's historic preservation programs and policies.

Ms. Sims was recognized for her DCHC leadership role in the highly successful Dallas County Sesquicentennial Celebration. Other accomplishments included the development of the DCHC Awards Banquet to recognize persons in the community who have contributed toward historic preservation and education, the initiation of the Heritage Education Essay contest for high school students, the development of a program to educate high school students about historical marker research, and the development of a brochure encouraging persons to document their history in businesses, institutions, and families.

Jean became Chairperson of the DCHC on March 1, 1995. At this time, the Commission was reduced from thirty-five to fifteen members calling for a great deal of restructuring. Jean did an admirable job of working with the transition, and at the same time, found a way to get the planning mechanism for the Sesquicentennial Celebration started. Those who have had the opportunity to work with Jean know she works hard, has a creative mind and will get the job done.

Congratulations, Jean. We are proud of you and appreciate the honor you bring to Dallas County.

1997 ANNUAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONFERENCE REPORT

By Lloyd Henderson

Once again, a very successful Annual Historic Preservation Conference was held in Austin during May 29-31 with over 500 people representing 90 Texas counties in attendance.

There were excellent workshops and educational sessions led by people who had developed very creative programs in their own counties. It was interesting to learn how local preservation projects in various counties are beginning to experience economic benefits from heritage tourism.

I was especially impressed with the group from Gonzales. They appeared in costume to share how the recent revival of home tours, re-enactments, the development of bed and breakfast businesses and the restoration of homes have become a means for drawing tourism and creating local interest in preservation. Other sessions which caught my interest included a session on strategies and funding mechanisms for rescuing Texas' historic school buildings and a session on how Cameron County Historical Commission uses art competition in their high schools as a media for helping their youth become aware of historical sites, customs, traditions and architecture.

However, the highlight of this conference was the tours. We were able to see original Spanish land grant documents at the Texas Land Office, receive an orientation on how to use the Texas State Archives, visit several restored log cabins and homes, watch homes being restored in Hayes County, and participate in a guided tour of the recently renovated Texas State Cemetery.

Next year, the conference will be held in El Paso. I know that is a long way from Dallas County, but you will miss an outstanding event if you miss this conference during the third week in April. El Pasoans will be recognizing their Quadricentennial (400 years) during this

time, and it should be an unusual opportunity to experience the history of the South Pass.

Chairman's Notes

by Lloyd Henderson

First, I want to express appreciation to the Dallas County Commissioners Court for the excellent DCHC appointments they made in January. We have a very congenial group of people with whom it is a pleasure to work.

Since 11 of the 15 Commission members are new appointees, we have spent the first quarter of 1997 getting organized into the following four committees: Historical Marker, Historical Preservation, History Appreciation, and The Chronicle Newsletter Committee. During this second quarter, we have been working toward defining the work of these committees. Each of the committees met during May to select the types of projects they will be involved in implementing during the next several months.

The one thing we are all experiencing is that the task of an active DCHC is not only unlimited, but also overwhelming for 15 people to carry out. In order to get the job done, the committees are encouraged to reach out and work through subcommittees with those of you who have experience and interest in Dallas County's historical preservation. Please let us know if you are interested in working on one of these subcommittees.

Again, thanks to the Commissioners Court and thanks to the Commission members who have volunteered to serve on the DCHC.

The Dallas County Historical Commission is a county board of the Dallas County Commissioners Court. *The County Chronicle* is a regular publication of the DCHC, 634 Records Building, Dallas, Texas 75202-3504.

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

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