

DALLAS COUNTY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 3

Summer 2018

“He’s Fourteen!”

Stevie Ray Vaughan’s First Studio Recording Session

By Fred Durham

In 1970, future Dallas actor Stephen Tobolowsky had graduated from Kimball High School a few months earlier when the band he was in was chosen to play two songs on an album that would feature four other local groups. When he showed up to record those two songs, he discovered that fellow bandmate Bobby Foreman had arranged for a few other musicians to join them. That made a lot of sense to Tobolowsky since, even though the band was named “Cast of Thousands,” it actually only had three members. But what did concern him was the age of one of the extra musicians who was sitting in a metal chair with his Gibson guitar.



Stevie Ray Vaughan's first recording session. Vaughan is seated; future Dallas actor Stephen Tobolowsky is at the microphone.

“He’s a child! He’s fourteen!” exclaimed Tobolowsky.

“It’s okay,” responded Foreman. “He’s really good.”

The group told the young teenager to “do whatever you want” and began to record their first song. It was when the guitarist began his solo that Tobolowsky said “the whole world changed.” He had never quite heard anything like that and neither had “the guys in the control room . . . they all just stopped.”

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This was not just your typical fourteen-year-old wanting to grow up to be a rock and roller—this was Stevie Ray Vaughan, and it was a full twelve years before he exploded to international fame following his 1982 performance at the Montreux Jazz Festival and the release of *his* first studio album, yet his immense talent was already evident.

From 1983 until his tragic death in a 1990 helicopter accident, Oak Cliff native Stevie Ray Vaughan did indeed change the world with his music. In 1983, readers of *Guitar Player* voted him “Best New Talent” and “Best Electric Blues Guitar Player.” The next year, the Blues Foundation named him “Entertainer of the Year” and “Blues Instrumentalist of the Year”, and in 1987, *Performance Magazine* honored him with “Rhythm and Blues Act of the Year.” He won six

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¡Felicidades!



Dallas Mexican American Historical League Celebrates Its Tenth Anniversary

By Juanita H. Nández

It may be difficult to believe that it has already been ten years since funeral home owners, Albert and Frances Gonzalez, collaborated with their good friends and long-time community activists, Jesse and Nellie Tafalla, to create the Dallas Mexican American Historical League (DMAHL). One cannot but help ask, where does the time go? And at the same time, when you think about all of the activities that DMAHL has been involved with, has it really only been ten years?

DMAHL sprang from concerns that both couples had that the Dallas Hispanic community was losing valuable social history information each time a community member passed away and that the community's *barrios* (neighborhoods) were quietly and gradually disappearing.

Understanding this, they quickly recognized that the only way to ensure that their history would be available for future generations was to immediately begin capturing the stories and contributions of Dallas' Mexican Americans, and to do this, DMAHL was formed in 2008.



Founding DMAHL members Albert Gonzalez (left) and Jesse Tafalla (right) at a 2009 DMAHL meeting.

Committed to *Preserving the History of Mexican Americans in Dallas*, DMAHL seeks to foster a greater understanding of the contributions of the Mexican American community by researching, collecting, presenting, and preserving historical and cultural experiences from the early 1900s to the present. This it does through a variety of methods--the collection of photos, the compilation of oral histories, the displaying of exhibits, the conducting of programs and forums, and the publication of books, articles, and other material.

Although still very young compared to some of Dallas' other historical organizations, much has been accomplished in the past decade. Original board members like to remember the early days when they began sharing their stories by producing small exhibits, simply taping photos to poster board, and showing them at local churches, libraries, and meeting places. Today, the exhibits are professionally produced and curated and displayed at venues like the Pollock Gallery at SMU, the Old Red Museum, the State Fair of Texas, and the Latino Cultural Center.



DMAHL's 2015 exhibit on Mexican American veterans at the Latino Cultural Center.

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Now Starring . . .

The Dallas County Historical Commission



In case you've ever wondered what it is exactly that the Dallas County Historical Commission does, if you have two minutes, you will no longer have to wonder. Thanks to an on-line video skillfully produced by Commission member Coy Poitier, it's now possible to see and to hear Commission members themselves explain and discuss the Commission's purpose and its many activities. To watch this very informative video, please visit the Historical Commission's website at www.dallascounty.org/dchc.

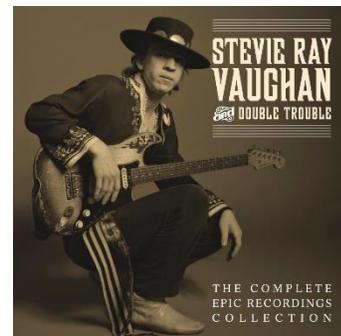


“He’s Fourteen!” (continued from page 1)

Grammy Awards and ten Austin Music Awards and was posthumously inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame, the Musicians Hall of Fame, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and with *Rolling Stone* calling him the twelfth greatest guitarist of all time.

As for that Tobolowsky guy, well, his music career was not nearly so successful. But he didn’t do half-bad doing some acting. He ended up being in some stuff called *Mississippi Burning*, *Groundhog Day*, *Thelma and Louise*, *Deadwood*, and *The Goldbergs*. And then there were those 200 other television shows and movies that he was in.

To hear Stephen Tobolowsky reminisce about his days in “*Cast of Thousands*” and to hear Stevie Ray Vaughan play that first time in a studio, go to Youtube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVV5aHgDFAc&t=2s) for an interview that Tobolowsky did for Music Life Radio. It is well worth the listen.

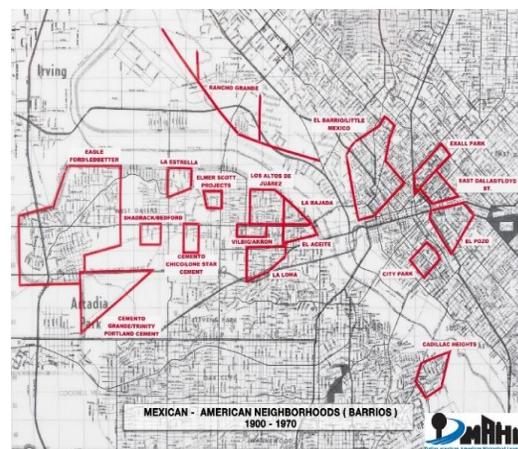


DMAHL (continued from page 2)



DMAHL's book on its 2015 veterans exhibit.

Its research and publication efforts have included the printing of *The Untold Story: A Tribute to Dallas' Mexican American Veterans and Families*, a documentation of the organization's major 2015 exhibit and the production of a map showing the location of Dallas' Mexican American barrios from 1900-1970. The map of past and present barrios is believed to be one of the most complete accounts of where Dallas Hispanics lived during much of the last century and complements DMAHL member Sol Villasana's book, *Dallas' Little Mexico*, which tells the story of Dallas' earliest barrio.



DMAHL's map of Dallas barrios, 1900-1970.

Recognizing that all history is interrelated, DMAHL, along with the Dallas Jewish Historical Society, Remembering Black Dallas, and Preservation Dallas, formed the Dallas Multicultural History Coalition in 2016. This relationship then immediately led to DMAHL and the Dallas Jewish Historical Society to partner together to obtain a Texas Historical Marker for a site near the Perot Museum and the downtown El Fenix with a very unique history. This site once contained a two-story frame structure that was originally constructed and first used in the early 1900s as a home, but that then became a Jewish synagogue and then the *Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana* (First Mexican Baptist Church) when the neighborhood's population changed and became the Little Mexico barrio.

Not surprisingly, such activity has resulted in the organization receiving a number of awards, including the 2013 Dallas Historical Society Award for Excellence in Community Service-Humanities/History and the 2015 *Ohtli* Award which is the highest honor bestowed by the Government of Mexico to people and organizations outside of Mexico for contributions to culture and empowerment which have created a path for Mexicans in the U.S. and in other countries. A documentary film produced by Javier Sanchez about DMAHL's 2015 exhibit on Mexican American veterans also won a regional Emmy in 2017.



Primera Iglesia Bautista about 1919.

In celebration of its tenth anniversary, DMAHL, in consultation with the Mexican Consulate, will be featuring major exhibits (**¡Aniversario!**) at the Latino Cultural Center from September 14-October 13 and in the Women's Building at the State Fair from September 28-October 21. The exhibits promise to be an appropriate commemoration of the organization's first decade and a preview of what will come in the next.

