On July 16, 1872, the first train pulled into Dallas, the Houston and Texas Central, known as the Central, which on its route from Houston had created towns along the way like Bremond and Groesbeck, named after railway officials. To get the rail link, Dallas, along with McKinney and Sherman to the north, contributed cash and bonds, plus land. Dallas gave 115 acres downtown which at one point was completed boxed in by rail lines. The Texas & Pacific went through downtown Dallas and its right of way became Pacific Avenue.

The eastern side of that box evolved later into a freeway, Central Expressway, named after the H&CT which originally had the right of way.