

# WEST IS BEST!

## Local Community History for the Children of West 1850-2015



★ What's Inside ★

*Before Us*

*Little Indian Boy*

West History and Extra History,  
Activities, Bibliography

~Photo courtesy of Urbanovsky Studio



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~Dedication ~

*This history of our community is dedicated to **YOU**, the **students** of all **West Schools**.*

♥ *You are the reason why West's heart beats strong!* ♥

Student Edition History Book compiled, written, and self-published by

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**West High School Class of 1971**

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*The views expressed herein by the author do not necessarily reflect the views of West ISD nor the West community.*

## ***Before Us***

*Close your eyes and imagine what you would see if you were a child here in 1850!*

**No West Trojans  
No Big Red and Black  
No freight trains stuck on the railroad track~**

**Not any churches  
Not any schools  
Not any playing fields or a cool blue pool ~**

**Before the cotton  
Before any corn  
Before T. M. West was even born~**

**No cherry kolaches  
No sausage on the grill  
No um-pah music for a Saturday night thrill ~**

**Not any grand parades  
No Friday bus trips  
Way before Our People came over on ships~**

**No I--35  
Not one truck or car  
Light only shined from the sun or the stars.**

**No sounds but the wind,  
The wild, and the free.  
This is the spot where West would be.**

**What if dinosaurs roamed here?  
What if meteors blazed by?  
Did buffalo graze the tall grasses so high?**

**When bubbling Bold Springs  
Brought the pioneers here,  
Rich earth was broken; a few trees were cleared.**

**These new farms grew families,  
And these families grew love.  
A community bonded with help from Above.**

**When our earliest ancestors  
Planted roots and settled down,  
This moment marked the start of our hometown.**



# WEST IS BEST!

## *History of Our Community*

We live in a place called WEST and its name is short and sweet. WEST is easy to spell, and it rhymes with BEST, BLESSED, NEST, and WESTFEST! Most of us are happy to live in this happy "nest." We feel "blessed" that our families chose the "best" community to live in, but what do we know about West way back in time *before us*, before anyone lived here?

← Read the poem *Before Us* and imagine West without the same environment we enjoy today. Can you see West without one single building? What would you think if you looked out over our countryside and saw no fences? No crops growing? No roads or Interstate 35? What would you see instead? Ask your teacher if the class can take a little walk inside the playground area parallel to Oak Street (FM 2114). Stand tall and look all around: north, south, east, and west, and especially observe what you see between you and the horizon on the green hills beyond Slovacek's.

The spot on the horizon where the earth and sky meet is where the first known settlers of this area decided to live. Welcome to Bold Springs!



*West folks love Westfest ~ A celebration of the Czech and German culture we share!  
Vitame Vas Na Westfest = Welcome to Westfest*

**W**e can still see clues from the past and learn about why people long ago wanted to live here. Back in the days before this land was called Texas, our community was a **rolling prairie** full of tall grasses and woods. **Fresh spring water** bubbled up from the ground in places where we see ponds and lakes today. When **Native Americans** hunted for food and wildlife, they camped at the springs to drink cool, fresh water.

In the year **1850**, over 165 years ago, settlers began moving to Texas after learning about rich **blackland to farm** and plentiful wildlife for food. Early settlers came here following **Neil McLennan**, a pioneer whose name remains West's **county** location. McLennan's family was attacked by Native Indians as they traveled up the **Brazos River**. When they found the **Texas Rangers'** outpost in **Waco village**, McLennan's family decided to stay.

### West's First Known Settlers ~ 1850



Traveling with the McLennans was **Isaac B. Cauble** and family. Mr. Cauble, who had fought in the **Texas War for Independence**, had been given a **grant** to choose land for his family to settle. He chose a place near one of the flowing springs “some

16 miles north of Waco village” and built a log cabin in the spot we **now** call **Lake Park** on **Tokio Road** (FM 1858). Since most of the **buffalo** had **disappeared** from this area, Cauble figured the Indians had gone too. Imagine his surprise when he found a peaceful family of **Comanche Native Americans** in the thick oak woods on the land he had chosen for his family to live! The Comanche family had a young son the same age as Isaac Cauble's son **James**. Before long, the two boys became friends and spent days exploring the woods, hunting, cooling off in the fresh springs, and having fun together. As time passed, young James Cauble's heart was broken when his father came home to tell him that his “**little Indian**” **friend** was very sick and would soon die. He felt a little better when he learned the Comanche believed the boy's **spirit would live another life**. With James right alongside the grave, he watched the boy's parents **bury their son** with his **toys**, his **best clothes**, his **dog**, and his **horse**. This Native American boy's grave is inside **Bold Springs Cemetery**, which is



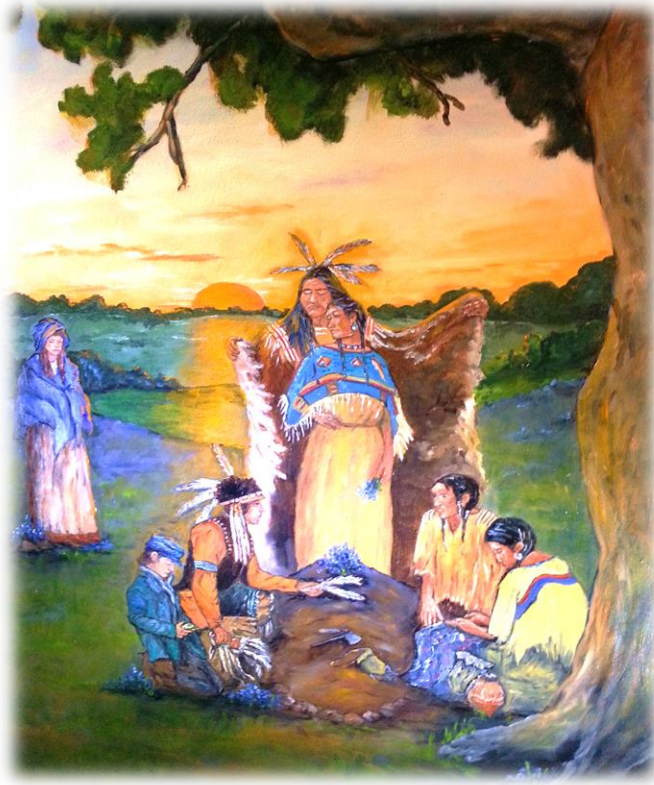


located on a hill west of where the Cauble cabin stood. Today the woods surround three ponds that were dug around the original springs. The cool water still bubbles at Lake Park, now known as Bold Springs Country Club, on the north side of Tokio Road, FM 1858.

✧ A historical marker tells about the Little Indian Boy buried in this cemetery and gives us more history about the first settlers. See page 48 to read the entire history on the marker which was placed at the entrance of Bold Springs Cemetery in 2011. Look at the picture in the center. ✧ Where do you think is the spot the Comanche boy is buried?







*"And when the sun sets in the west I will see you there."*



*The Burial*

*History of West Museum Mural by Georgia Polansky Hutyra*





## *Little Indian Boy*

### A Poem for the Children of West Introduction

Back in the early years of the West community, over 150 years ago, one of the first settlers **Isaac "Doc" Cauble** and his family built a log cabin in the area we know today as **Lake Park on Tokio Road** (FM 1858). There, his family lived near **Bould's Spring**, a spring of fresh bubbling water we now call **Bold Springs**. The Caubles thought they were the only folks living in this area then, so imagine how quiet and lonely it must have been to be a child. Then one day in the woods near the spring, the Caubles discovered a camp of peaceful **Comanche, a Native American family** living in the thick oak forest. Mr. Cauble's young son **James** was delighted to find an **"Indian boy"** about his same age. They became **great friends** exploring the woods, hunting, swimming, and growing up. But their great friendship was cut short when the little native became sick with whooping cough and, sadly, he died.

In the custom of the Comanche, the parents buried their son wrapped in soft deerskin with all his best clothes and any toys he had, so that in his next life he would be well-dressed and happy. The little boy would also have two of his favorite friends – his pony and his dog. Yes, that's right – **the Comanche boy is buried in an unmarked grave on the hill next to a tall oak tree in Bold Springs Cemetery overlooking the beautiful valley. Buried with him is his horse, his dog, his clothes, and his toys.**

"Little Indian Boy" is a poem that celebrates what it must have been like for **young James Cauble and his little native American friend** to be living and playing each day in the woods near **Bould's Spring**, just two miles away from the City of **West, Texas**.

~ © 2015 by Margie Mashek Davis

Suggestions for activities with the poem: 🌟 Practice oral reading; enter the UIL Oral Reading Competition! 🌟 Do you like to sing? Make up a tune and sing the poem! 🌟 With a group or friend, act out a scene from the poem! 🌟 Some students think this is a sad poem but it's really happy! Talk about "happy" with a group and share with the class! 🌟 The Indian Boy was a Comanche native. Find the true story about a little girl named Cynthia Ann Parker who was kidnapped by Comanches not far from West! She learned to love them as her family, and her son Quanah became a famous warrior and tribal chief. When Cynthia was found, she did not want to return to the Parker family, and she rejected the white man's way of life.

## ~ Little Indian Boy ~

*A True Story*



Oh, little Indian boy, little Indian boy~  
Will you come with me and play?  
It's such a pretty, perfect day!  
We can run off to the creek,  
Playing sneaky hide and seek  
All day long!



Oh, little Indian boy, my little Indian boy~  
Will you teach me how to ride?  
I trust you to be my guide.  
When your pony starts to run,  
Jump on with me! Let's have fun  
Riding the wind!

You're my friend, Indian boy, little Indian boy~  
Will you show my dog a trick?  
Like how to make him fetch a stick?  
Then we can hunt a squirrel or two,  
Take them home and cook a stew  
For our dogs!



You're a strong Indian boy, my little Indian boy~  
Let's climb up this giant tree!  
There's a hundred miles to see!  
We'll pretend we are great birds,  
Singing songs without the words  
In the shade.

Golden-skinned Indian boy, growing big, Indian boy~  
With the heat that summer brings,  
We'll cool off in Bold's Spring\*.  
Then we'll dry off in the sun!  
Being lazy is so much fun  
When it's warm.



\*Bold's Spring was first known as Bould's Springs after the family who found one of the natural flowing springs. The springs are still bubbling fresh water into three ponds at Lake Park. This area near West is best known for Bold Springs Cemetery where our little Indian rests peacefully.



Hey, Indian boy, my pal, my Indian boy~  
When the weather's getting cool,  
We don't have to go to school!  
We can add and write and read.  
My ma can teach us, yes indeed!  
We'll be smart!



My best friend Indian boy, my buddy, Indian boy~  
I'm ready to hunt and play,  
But Papa says you're sick today.  
You have a fever and a cough.  
Please try to shake it off  
And get well.

Oh, little Indian boy, my brave little Indian boy~  
I saw your mother cry today,  
Your father led your horse away.  
Your pup was whining, oh so sad.  
Was the whooping cough so bad  
That you died?

My brother Indian boy, my best friend Indian boy~  
I climbed the hill with them and prayed,  
And helped dig the grave where you'll be laid.  
Your next world will be the best,  
And when the sun sets in the west  
I will see you there.



Brave Brother Indian boy, my once little Indian boy~  
Your pony slowly followed you,  
Your little pup was feeling blue,  
So he laid down at your feet  
With all your clothes folded neat,  
And he died too.



Oh Indian brother, my angel Indian boy~  
It's so hard to say goodbye,  
So I'll smile and try not to cry.  
This lovely hill where you will rest  
Looks over a town to be named West.  
We will call it home.

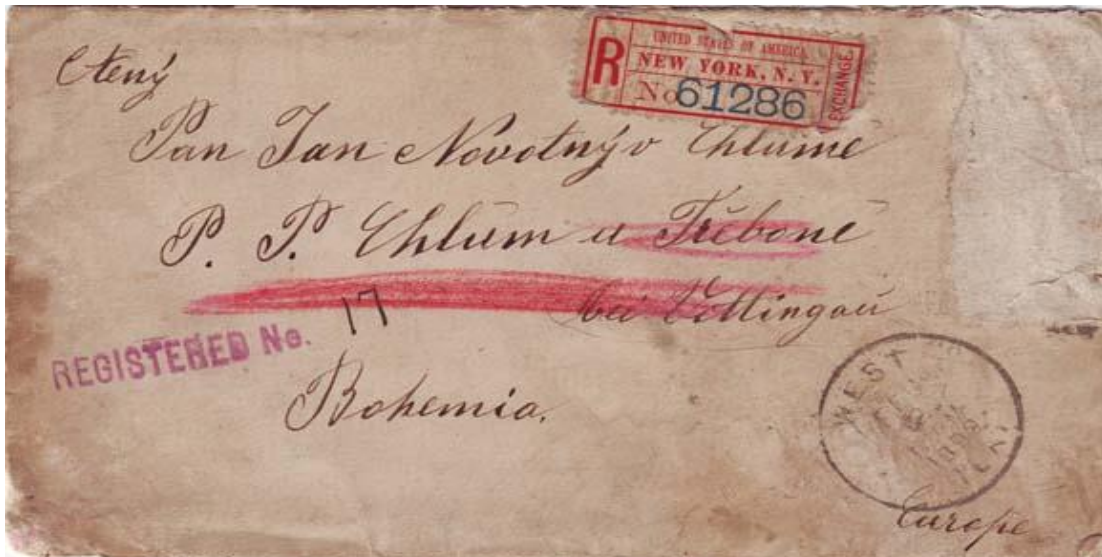
## Bold Springs: "Feeder" to the Chisholm-Shawnee Trails

*Before roads, Texas had trails!*

The Cauble family remained friends with the Comanche family, but like other native tribes of Texas, they moved on to Indian Territory in Oklahoma to the north. The Caubles continued to raise cattle and horses, and soon noticed other pioneers moving into northeastern McLennan County. The **Bould family** built their cabin near **another spring** closer to the area we know today as **South Harrison Street** near West Library and Community Center. These paths between Waco village and the growing communities of Dallas-Fort Worth became known as a way to move cattle north on the **Chisholm and Shawnee Trails**. Settlers would **stop their wagons to feed and water horses and cattle at the springs** by Bould's cabin or a couple miles west near the Cauble's log cabin. Soon this area was being called Bould's Spring, then **Bold Springs** after the Bould family moved away. Today, West still uses the name in **Bold Springs Baptist Church** located on Harrison Street, **Bold Springs Tire and Lube**, **Bold Springs Country Club** (Lake Park) and, of course, **Bold Springs Cemetery** - the final resting place of the young Comanche boy. (*See the Texas Historical Chisholm Trail map in the Extras section.*)

### First Post Office

By the **mid-1850s** settlers moving through Texas were attracted by the **blackland prairie**, **fresh water supply**, and **woodlands** in this area. A **post office** moved into the Bould's empty cabin and the **stagecoaches** traveling from Waco village to the Dallas/Fort Worth communities began stopping to **change horses**



★ Can you find the West postmark?

(1889 from West, Texas, to Bohemia in Europe)

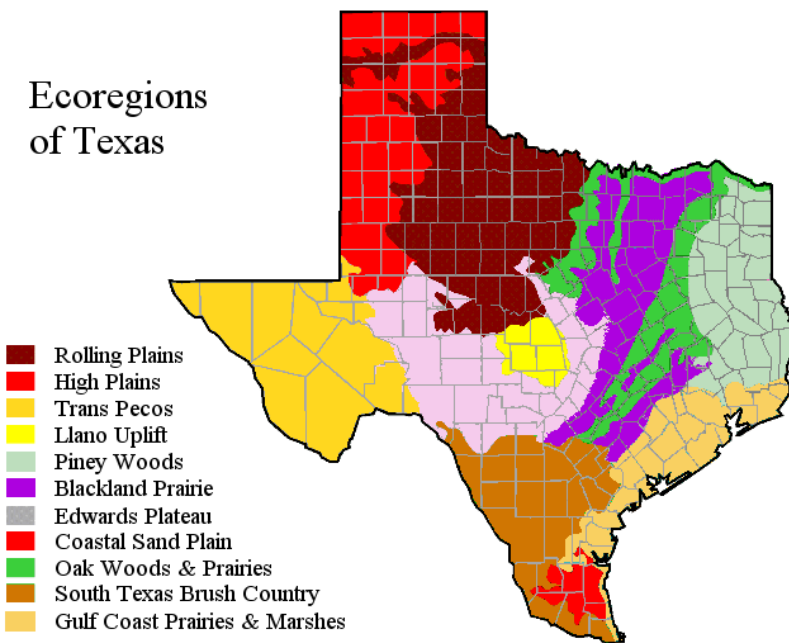
★ Do the Math: How old is this letter? ★ Research: How many miles did it travel?



and deliver mail twice weekly. Families passing through soon decided to stay and settle here, namely the Eastlands, McCrarys, Dunns, Lewises, Vaughns, and McKaigs. Several of the men in these families served as postmaster of the Bold Springs Post Office. Postmasters had the job of handling the mail and preparing it to be sent. Postage depended on how far away the mail would travel. Postmasters also had to keep the area in front of the cabin neat for the horses, wagons, and stagecoaches. They had to keep a water trough filled and also had to clean up after the horses. Bold Springs on the Chisholm-Shawnee Trail was the place to be!



Ecoregions of Texas



Eco-Regions of Texas

← **Blackland Prairie:** In which region is the West area located?

↑ Can you pinpoint West?  
See a larger map on page 48.

### Land for Sale

By 1856, the population in Texas was growing. The legislature in the

state capitol of Austin chose a large section of northeastern McLennan County to be sold as University Lands to raise money for schools and colleges. The pioneers who knew the land was excellent for raising crops wanted to own their own farms, plus this land was not expensive, so buying University Lands was an easy decision. Some of the first families purchasing land were named Bennett, Ingraham, Russell, Hurlock, and Closner. Alberto Vaughn helped organize the only church here at that time, Bold Springs Missionary Baptist Church, with the preacher, Dr. J.J. Riddle, also serving as the doctor of the Bold Springs area.

According to James "Jim" Cauble (*remember him?*), the main activities (besides work and church) in this "gathering place" were "dancing and horse and pony racing." The 1860 census listed Bold Springs as the second largest community in McLennan County with a population of 311.

When the **War Between the States (Civil War)** began, many of the local men joined the Confederate Army. With a major war upsetting the entire United States, the **selling of land and immigration from other countries was suspended or stopped** until the war was over and the nation was at peace. Then, it was time for the community of Bold Springs to grow again!



### **Thomas West Buys 260 Acres**

(where we all have probably walked!)

In the **late 1860s** Confederate veteran Captain **Thomas M. West** made his way to McLennan County after an "Indian scare" in Denton, Texas, north of Dallas. He **moved his large herd of cattle** here to a place he called "a paradise." After settling on his new property, he became interested in placing Bold Springs on the Texas map. He constructed a better **stagecoach stop** and became postmaster at Bold Springs Post Office. He built a **dry goods store** and sold necessities to the growing community. In **1872** he became an **agent** for the selling of University Lands and purchased **260 acres of land from W.W.**

**Bennett.** Mr. West had no idea his land would never be farmed nor would his herd of cattle be able to graze much here. He had no way of knowing his land would be the new downtown West neighborhood of today! Mr. West was busy selling land and running the post office and store at the stagecoach stop at Bold Springs when he noticed new settlers asking about buying land here too. While most of Bold Springs was an **Anglo community**, a new wave of **European immigrants** were making their way from the **other side of the world** to Texas for the rich farmland and grasslands. When the **Czechs** (from **Bohemia and Moravia**) and **Germans** (from **Hanover, Prussia, and Bavaria**) came to do business, Thomas West welcomed them.

### **The Czechs and Germans Arrive**

From **1872-1875**, the Czech and German immigrants made their way into central Texas seeking the rich **blackland prairie** they had heard was available to buy. One of the first Czechs was **Vaclav Masek** (Mashek) who became friends with **Thomas West** in **1873**. Mr. Masek and Mr. West looked over the available University Lands for sale and *"marked off two parcels of 60 acres with logs."* With these 120



acres, Vaclav Masek went back to South Texas and moved his family to the farm, the **present day location of West Middle and High School** on Jerry Mashek Drive (a road later named for his grandson). The family lived in a small cabin belonging to Mr. West until they could build their own home. Mr. Masek and his wife **Rosalie** raised one son and five daughters, but sadly, in 1892 Mr. Masek was in a **terrible accident** when his mule-team spooked and he was thrown under the wagon. A **Texas Historical Marker** at the St. Mary's Cemetery tells that Vaclav Masek was the first person buried there in **April 1892**. By then Vaclav's son Joseph had married and continued farming as he and his wife Katherine raised ten children.



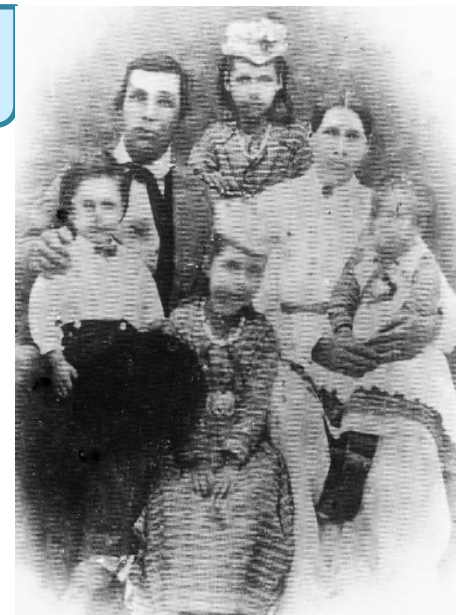
West children helped their families harvest cotton.

Other Czech families arriving around **1874** were Mr. Masek's brother-in-law Frank **Soukup**, as well as the families of John **Stanislav**, John **Fojt**, Leopold **Skrehot**, and Frank **Urbanovsky**—all to buy University Lands to farm. The price per acre was **\$1.00 up to \$2.50**. Many farms surrounding West today once belonged to the first families settling here.

Many present-day farming families are **descendants** of the first ones to break up the soil with an **ox or mule-team** and a **single-blade plow**. When crops were ready for harvest, the entire family was in the fields picking

*ACTIVITY: Read Joseph Mashek's oral history (p.69) telling his childhood memories as a child when Bold Springs became West. He recalls going to a one-room school, riding over the countryside with no fences or roads, and Mr. West running the only store at Bold Springs.*

cotton, pulling corn, threshing grain, and cutting and hauling hay. Northeastern McLennan County was also the spot chosen by **early German pioneers** who arrived in wagon trains from Illinois. First to arrive was Detrich **Blume**, while the families of Edward and John **Deiterman**, Clemens **Uptmor**, and Frank **Debbendener** soon followed. August **Groppe** and family arrived in **1874** and purchased 400 acres just south of where St. Mary's Cemetery is today. His **original barn** has recently been restored and has a **Texas Historical Marker**. Mr. Groppe was very active in "**free enterprise**." He was a **stockholder**, or part-



The Vaclav Masek Family 1873

owner, in the **Brazos Valley Cotton Mill** and **West Water Company**. After the railroad arrived, he owned two businesses in downtown, one of which also has a historical marker. When you visit downtown, **look at the bricks** in Mr. Groppe's building, for they were **handmade** near West using clay found "west of West."

George Kramer was one of largest landowners in Central Texas with a "fine farm of 1,000 acres." His livestock was the talk of the town as Mr. Kramer was said to have a "magnificent herd of thoroughbred swine." A.C. Wendorf and Ernest Willenborg also settled in the nearby Tours and Gerald communities. The Czechs and Germans became close friends as many of them could **not yet speak English**, but they could understand the same church services since many had belonged to the Catholic Church in the "old world." The Germans and Czechs shared a log cabin church from 1874 until **1890** when St. Martin's Church of Tours was built.



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★ *St. Martin's of Tours served the area until a church was built in West in 1892. In 1903 West's wooden church burned and a grand church and school were then built. St. Mary's School is still standing strong. In 1955 the magnificent church was torn down to build a larger modern church.*

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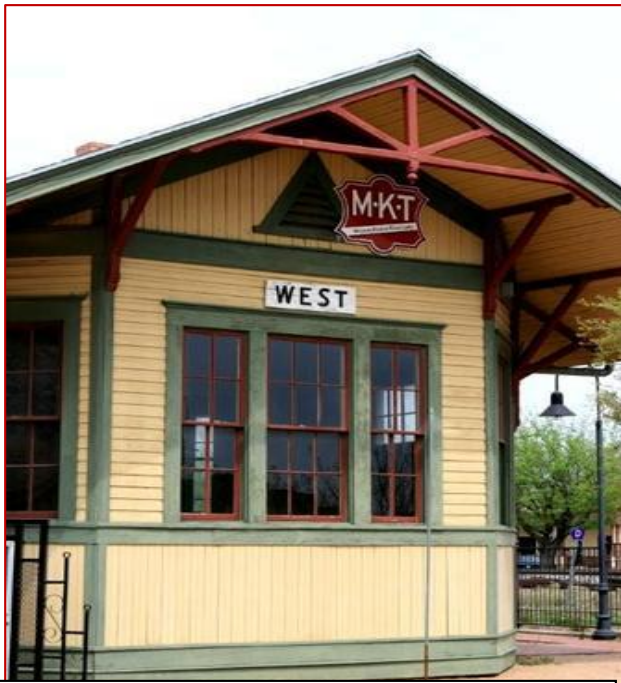
By **1882** all the University Lands had been sold, but the flood of German and Czech immigrants continued. Many of the earlier Anglo settlers allowed the immigrants to **rent or sharecrop** their farmland, which meant the farmer worked the land and bought seed and other supplies. When the crop was harvested and sold, the **landowner received one-third of the profit** (money made) while the **farmer kept the remaining two-thirds**. Later many landowners allowed these farmers to purchase their farms. While the farmers made their living **from growing and selling crops**, their former landlords began **buying and selling cotton, cattle, and real estate** — land, homes, and soon, businesses in the growing area. **Free enterprise** was exciting for the new Americans!

**Bold Springs** was no longer just a popular watering spot on the well-worn path between Waco and North Texas. **Something bigger was coming!**





✪ Mural painting by Bobby Allen~ Number Seven on the M-K-T Railway passing "West Station"



✪ M-K-T Railroad Station "Katy Depot"

## M-K-T Railroad ~ **West** Station!

**M-K-T** stands for three states: Missouri, Kansas, and Texas. These three states became **connected for business trade** with the newly formed M-K-T Railroad that just happened to **run through Thomas West's property**. By 1882, the southern line built a **train station on Mr. West's land** next to the railroad tracks. Soon the area became known as **West's Station**. Whenever a new map of this area was drawn, the town's name "**WEST**" was used. **January 4, 1882**, was the **first time the name WEST** was used on an official deed at the **McLennan County Clerk's office** in Waco. The new railroad needed men to help build it, and **jobs** became available. Mr. West divided his land next to the train tracks and sold it so **more businesses** could be built. **Large stock pens for cattle** and other livestock were built to hold the animals before loading them onto the rail cars for **shipping to other parts of the United States**. West was busy!





✪ A very busy street in downtown West! Can you guess where this is today?

## West Grows with New Businesses

Once the M-K-T Railroad was built and running smoothly, the **post office** at Bold Springs moved into "town" to collect mail from West Station. The **Bold Springs Baptist Church** also **moved** into West. Mr. West himself opened a **new general store** next to the train tracks. Before the railroad was finished, many stores that popped up were wooden buildings and not very sturdy. By **1890**, the **first block of brick buildings was completed** with more on the way. With all the building of new businesses, the town needed a bank, and who else but Thomas West would build the **First National Bank of West**? **Snokhous's Blacksmith Shop** (*see p. 21*) still sits facing the railroad tracks today as a reminder of when horses and mules worked the land before tractors. Many of the new store-fronts remain standing facing the railroad tracks today, **115 years later!**



✪ Can you spot this OWL sign in the photo above?

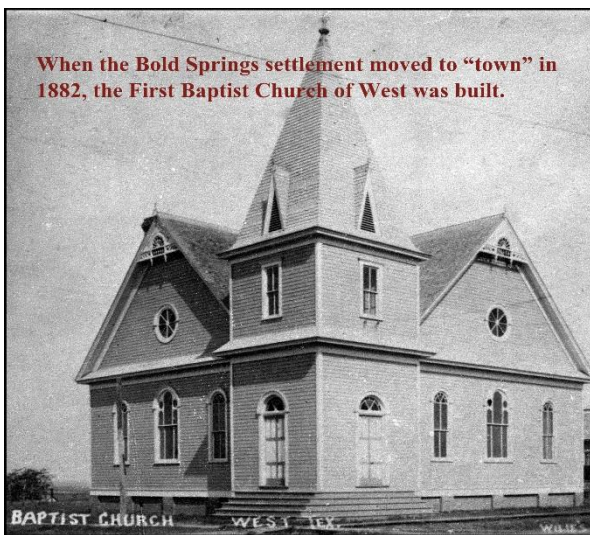
**Old Corner Drugstore** remains in its original building and the **Groppe Building** is now an antique shop with the **original water cistern** inside. Stepping across the alley behind the Groppe's was **Brown's Furniture** with the "OWL" sign painted on the side. This building now houses the very first **History of West Museum**, the place where we can visit

and see **Mr. West's bank vault** open with **gold bars** inside! Yes, looking inside the old buildings on Main and Oak Streets can help us imagine all the activity of **selling and trading** in 1900. **West was on the rise!**





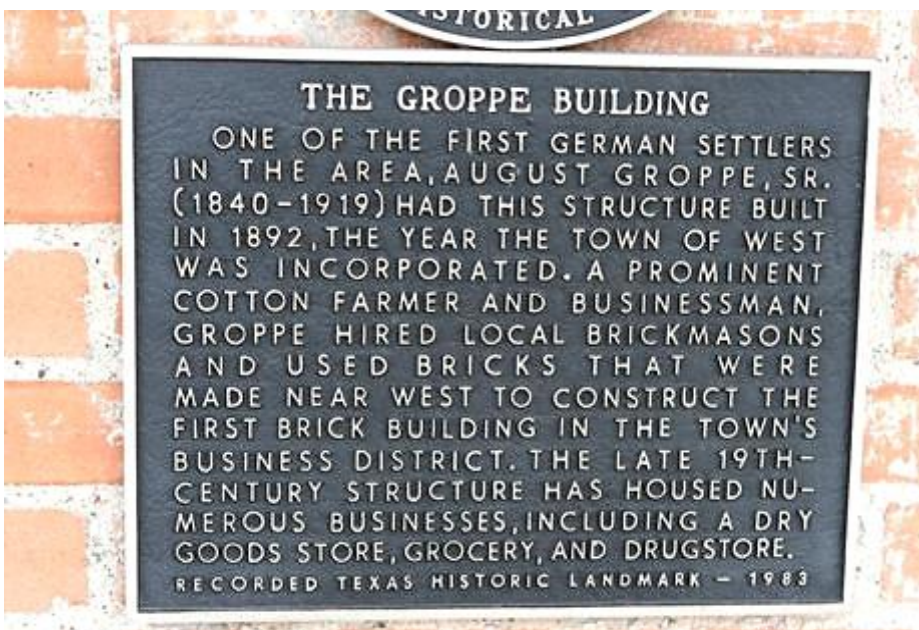
⊛ *Downtown West before 1900: This is now the corner of Main & Pine Street.*



When the Bold Springs settlement moved to "town" in 1882, the First Baptist Church of West was built.

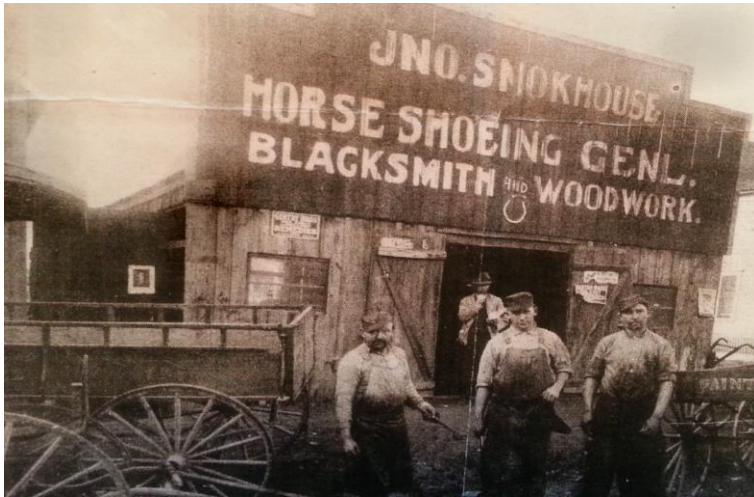


⊛ *Notice the dark-colored bricks made from West soil.*



⊛ *German settler August Groppe built the first brick building with Thomas West's help. Mr. West sold sections of his land to those who wanted to build new businesses along the new railroad tracks. West citizens today still use these same buildings! The Groppe Building is located on the corner of Oak and Main Street and is now the Old Czech Corner Antique Store. Go inside to see Mr. Groppe's water well and more of the brickwork!*





✪ *Farmers depended on the skilled Snokhouse family to keep their farming equipment running smoothly.*

### June 11, 1892: West, Texas ~ Official City!

By 1889, West was becoming a "boom town", which meant the town was growing fast. Not only were the Czechs, Germans, and earlier settlers **harvesting plenty of cotton and grain** on their farms, but the immigrants also began **opening businesses** in town. The **railroad was busy** with moving cattle, cotton, and other crops sold in the bigger cities north and south. Living in West meant plenty of jobs with well-taken-care-of families.



✪ *Cotton bales were compressed and wrapped to load on the train.*



✪ *Pickin' time!*



Brothers Fred and Abe Whipkey founded the first newspaper, *The West Weekly Times*, which spread the news that West was a **prosperous** place to live and do business. As the population grew, it seemed likely that West was no longer a little town. The newspaper announced that on **June 11, 1892**, an election to incorporate West would be held, and by the end of the day the decision was made. ***West was an official city!***

What did becoming a city mean? It meant the first **officers** of a new city government would be chosen to **plan out** how the city could grow properly. **Walter W. Morgan** served as the **first Mayor** of West. He and his officers worked to establish what every city needs. The **West Water Company** for running water in homes began in 1894, and the **West Volunteer Fire Department** also formed that year. **Electricity** came to West in **1900**, and **telephone services** arrived in **1902**. With this "technology" entering the picture, it was **TIME FOR SCHOOL!**



*A post card of downtown West's **Front Street** with electricity - 1900  
Notice the dirt road and very few cars. Can you find Old Corner Drugstore?*

## **West Public School System Begins**

**West Public School System** actually started out as three private schools. With school children speaking three different languages (English, Czech, German), three separate schools seemed like the right idea at the time. English speaking students enrolled at the private **Allen's Academy**. Professor William O. Allen opened both an elementary and high school in **1890**. Students could even board (live) at the house adjoining the school.

Two parochial (private) schools were formed by the Catholic communities, the first in **1890** in nearby Tours. **St. Martin's School** taught the children their lessons in the German language, while **St. Mary's School (1890)** in West, taught lessons in the Czech language. Later, students at St. Mary's learned Latin to participate in their daily church services. Saint Mary's is still a very active parochial school today; however, all of their classes are taught in English.



After West became a true city in **1892**, Professor Allen pushed for the city officials to form **West Public School System**. His idea was a success and **West Elementary** was constructed on **Harrison Street** in the same ←spot it stands today! In **1905** the building had to be enlarged and again in **1909** when grades eleven and twelve were needed (*see the building behind the main school?*). Children of the Czech and German immigrants

who attended the public schools had to learn **English** while their parents taught them to read and write in Czech or German at home. Stories from grandparents and great-grandparents are still told today about starting school and not knowing how to speak English!

Besides West schools, children living in the rural communities of **Marak, Cottonwood, Brooken, Leroy, Oak Valley, Tyson, Rodger's Hill, Leggott, Tokio,** and **Alligator Creek** went to school in a "one room" schoolhouse. One early school (about 1883) near Tours with a mix of Czech-German students was named **Poverty Ridge**. Imagine being in class everyday with your older or younger brothers and sisters, all being taught by the same teacher in the same room!



♣ Leggott School children played music and learned to read.

♣ Lillian Sulak Schroeder is the little girl by letter 'Y' in Oak Valley.





☼ *St. Mary's taught classes in Czech.*



☼ *SMS 8th graders graduated to West High School.*

## A New Century ~ 1900

At the turn of the 20th century-1900-West was a bustling town with nearly 1000 citizens. Over 70 businesses with wooden sidewalks lined the streets, which were not yet paved. Lively entertainment could be found on weekends, such as dances at the West Auditorium and music at the Charles Jares Opera House. On Trade Days everyone dressed up for shopping, meeting and visiting friends, or trading goods and enjoying the local foods prepared by "Westonians".



☼ *West Mayor Holt built his home facing the railroad tracks. It still stands today. Noticed how everyone is dressed up—maybe for meeting friends and shopping at West Trade Days!*



## Transportation Improves

In **1912**, the M-K-T was chugging through the town several times daily but, like today, these trains **carried freight** (heavy shipments of products) but not any passengers. The farmers were still **plowing with mule teams, oxen, and horses** connected to the plow that the farmer guided with reins. Loads of grain were **carried to storage by wagons** hitched up to mules or horses. **Cars** were still a rare sight in those days but less and less people rode long distances on horseback. All anyone really needed was right here in West, or so it seemed. **How in the world could West grow** if there wasn't a better way to get here? How could families visit the larger cities without closing down the work on the farm so the horses could be hitched up to a carriage or wagon?

### The Electric Railway—The Interurban Comes to West



✪ *The electric generators gave power to the electric train. Here, the workmen have to move it inside and connect it to the power cables.*

Waco. The Dallas company approved and construction began on **Reagan Street**. In fact, you may notice today the tall towers carrying electricity to the city on the same street. In **1913** smaller electrical power lines **connected to railcars with an electric cable**, sort of like an extension cord we use today.

Rail tracks were laid down in the street and **Tommy Tucker**, the West Interurban manager, turned on the **electric generators** at the station on the corner of Reagan and Oak Street (the intersection where West has its in-town traffic light today). By October 1913, the citizens



of West could hop on the red and cream-colored Interurban headed to **Waco, Hillsboro, or Dallas**. Out-of-town shoppers could travel to West to buy fresh food and goods on West Trade Days at the busy West City Hall area across the street from the Interurban station.



★ *Looks like a busy day in West! Notice the barefooted boy standing in the dirt street.*

## The First Highway to West

By **1915** the State of Texas began **building highways** for cars and trucks to travel along the **same path** used by the early pioneers and settlers. The spring water found along the way had given

the path the name "The King's Trail", but the new Texas Highway Department tagged the new road the **Meridian Highway** for it would run down the middle of Texas and into other states to the north. For the maps being drawn, the new road was coded as **State Highway 2 (SH 2)**. Because of all the money SH 2 would cost, it earned the nickname: the *Million Dollar Highway*.

From **San Antonio to Austin, through Waco and West to Dallas**, the new "Million Dollar Highway" was constructed. We still use this same road in West today, as it is the road we call **Main Street** that travels out past the **Westfest and West Rodeo Grounds** to the south of town. To the north it is **Jerry Mashek Drive** that takes us by **West Middle and High School** and out past the **Knights of Columbus KC Park** on into Hill County.



★ *Old gas station on Highway 2 stands today.*

With more ways to travel between cities, businesses along Front (Main) Street increased. By **1916** West had **three banks, two newspapers** (one in English, one in Czech), **three cotton gins, a cottonseed oil mill, a cotton mill** for spinning thread for fabric, **West Bottling Plant** which sold "cherry phosphate and peach mellow" soda, and several **dry goods** (mostly clothing and fabric) and **grocery stores**. The **Nemecek Brothers Meat Market** had been in business since 1896 and continued to



grow with customers stopping in West to buy the tasty sausages, bacon, beef, and pork. In **1917 Liberty Theater** was opened for entertainment and movies. The City of West spent \$13,000 to build **West City Hall**, the same offices we use now for running our city's business. A new factory along the **Interurban tracks** (*now Reagan Street*) produced brooms and mops.

And let's not forget M-K-T! In **June 1915** there were "310 cases of eggs, 89 coops of chickens, and 30 buckets of butter, and over a ton of fresh cabbage shipped out" of West on the freight train! Add to that, "12 to 15 freight cars of livestock were shipped north" each month. **Shipped in monthly:** "8-10 freight cars of flour, 3-5 cars of sugar and molassas, and 15 freight cars of ice". **Each year M-K-T** arrived with "8-10 cars of buggies, 6 cars of wagons, and 16-20 cars of farm implements and tools". *West was moving in, moving out, and moving up!*



★ Today's Czech-American Restaurant was a general store.



★ West City Hall, built in 1917, still serves the community.



★ Nemecek ring bologna ("baloney") remains a West favorite.



★ Sunday services continue in West United Church.

Yes, the little watering station of the 1850s had grown into a **real city**. Of all the businesses in West, **over one-third** were owned by **Czechs and Germans**. On Saturdays West was full of people bringing in their goods and fresh produce for **West Trade Days** held in the area around West City Hall, which had now added a pavilion and a water fountain. **Borden's Milk** built a cooling station for dairy farmers and **West Flour Mill** added a poultry and egg farm. **Car dealerships** were built and soon the city voted to fund a **sewer system** and a **natural gas system** for heating homes. Newly **paved streets** helped West look more like a **modern city** instead of a dusty frontier town. On Sundays church-goers could attend the church services of their choice as West had over **seven churches** in town and another large church in Tours five miles away. Many organizations and clubs were developed to boost the city's growth, such as the **Masons**, **Germania Club**, **SPJST Fraternal**, **Sokol Gymnastics**, **Knights of Columbus**, **KJT-KJZT**, and **Kiwanis**. Most of these clubs remain active in helping the youth of West today!



✪ Grimm's modern gas pumps in Tours



✪ Skyview of West with interurban tracks on Reagan Street.

## World Changes Bring Problems

With all of the growth in our little town, West did have its problems especially when world-wide changes hurt a small-town economy. The **prices for cotton** began to fall and the **United States** entered into the **Great War**, later known as **World War I**. The country of **Germany** was seen as the "*bad guy*" who had started the war, and a few people in West acted out by being **disrespectful** to the Czech-German immigrants in the area. By the **mid-1920s**, several **groups united** the Anglos and the Czech-Germans so West could grow again, especially after the war. Town leaders promoted fairs, more Trade Days, and organized a **Chamber of Commerce**. Women united in the **West Home Demonstration Club** and church organizations as well. In **1923**, **West High School** and **Dunbar School** were established and by **1927**,



West schools were rated 17th highest in Texas. Organized sports, especially West High **Bulldog** football, helped bring school spirit to the town. Coach Kozelski joked that the team's secret to winning was when West quarterback Deveny called out plays in the Czech language. The other teams would get confused and lose concentration on the game!

### *1930 West High School **Bulldogs** Trojans!*



★ Many of these players' names are recognized by students today: **Front row:** *W. Montgomery, Devers, F. Nemecek, T. Sulak, T. Fields, Popp, Plsek, Deveny.* **Second row:** *D. Nerren, Coach Kozelski, C. Deveny, N. Gerlich, B. Morgan, G. Bruegging, Bezdek, Principal, R. Coleman.* **Third row:** *B. Sord, R. Nemecek, J. Mashek, J.L. Hruska, P. Donnelly, Bruegging, A. King, Mikeska, E. Nemecek, A. Koen*

\*These players represent the students who could be present at Urbanovsky Studio on Picture Day. A few players not in the photo: Beseda, Zatopek, C. Kolacek, Hlavaty, Schmaltz, Ballew, and Gregory.

### **Team Name and School Colors Improve in the 1930s**

The West Bulldogs team and Coach H. J. Kozelski decided to change the school mascot since so many other area high school football teams were named Bulldogs. They chose **Trojans** after two winning seasons, much like the University of Southern California Trojans who won two college championships in 1931 and 1932. The school colors of **orange** and **black** were changed to **red** and **black**. History was made! ***Go TROJANS!***



✪ *West High School, built in 1923, will be restored for West Independent School District (WISD) Administration Offices after West ISD community members and ex-students united in support of preserving the nearly century-old building. Besides offices, areas will be set aside for displaying historical photographs, trophies, and other memorabilia—*  
*"For the glory of old West High!"*

## The Great Depression

Although West kept trying to stay a close community, the rest of America was struggling with a time of financial uncertainty (money problems) in 1929, known as the **Great Depression**. One West bank had to close while the other two (still in business today) helped farmers keep their land by **lending money** for raising cotton and grain. **Cotton prices** were so **low** many farmers switched to corn, maize, wheat, and hay. A time of drought, **no rainfall**, made some farmers want to give up trying. The cotton mill and other agricultural businesses stayed open, but workers were paid **less money**. Stores in town closed earlier too. Just like today's West, its citizens helped one another and pulled together.



✪ *West farmers were fortunate that their cotton could be sold to the West Cotton Mill or shipped on the M-K-T.*



## West During World War II

In the **late 1930s** most of Europe was at war again. After Japanese aircraft dropped bombs on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii in **1941**, the United States had to defend itself and join other countries to fight for world peace. **World War II** interrupted the slow progress West was making to recover from the Great Depression. **Hundreds of young men from West and all its surrounding towns** answered the call to fight, and many served in the famed **36th Infantry Division**, the first American division to invade Europe. A heavy bomber named *The City of West* was dedicated to the citizens for their support and patriotism.



★ A WWII Bomber was named *The City of West* for the patriotism and support shown by West citizens young and old.★

Farmers needed for growing crops were not sent to war, but many West farmers joined the fight anyway. With the men away, **women took jobs and managed the farms** to support the family. Women in West also had to change the ways they cooked family meals. A new way to help the soldiers with supplies and food was by **rationing**, limiting the amount of foods and other supplies families could buy. **War Rationing Coupon Books** limited such grocery items as sugar, butter, cooking oils, and meats. With gasoline and tires also rationed, the electric **Interurban** was helpful to those who worked out of town. **Shoes were limited to two pair a year** which was not easy for West's growing children. When the war ended in **1945**, it was time to celebrate!



★ Do you think West's kids went hungry during WWII?★

## Happy Days Are Here Again?

The years following WWII were a welcome change. Mayor George Kacir helped expand more businesses like the **West Flour Mill** and the building of the **West Twine Mill** where cotton was spun into thread. **Lorch's**, a **garment plant**, gave women with sewing skills a chance to see and **sew the latest fashions** for the large department stores in Dallas and other large cities.

Perhaps the most welcomed site for the youth of West came at the end of the **1940s** when the **August Dulock** family built the **West Playdium Swimming Pool**. A large spring-fed pool and a nice-sized pool for small children became the all-time favorite **family fun** in West. Beside the pool was a large auditorium for **roller skating and dancing**. A large **picnic area** with swing sets and see-saws delighted the little kids. A **snack bar, jukebox**, and a large spinning top in the middle of the pool brought in fun-loving teenagers from other cities as well.

*See the Urbanovsky's photographs of the West pool newly constructed in the Extras section! Very cool!*



*Cool water from natural springs feels great in the heat.*

← *The famous "high-dive" at the Playdium*

West citizens were in for more fun and entertainment in **1947** when the **West Fair and Rodeo Association** was formed and began a **tradition** that returns every second weekend of August. Several leaders in our town, H. J. Kozelski, R. J. Marak, Joe Holasek, Henry Heitmiller, Raymond Nemecek and others made plans to organize a **genuine rodeo with bronc bustin', bullriding, barrel racing, calf roping**, and more hair-raising moments with winners earning cash prizes, saddles, belt buckles and other awards. The group researched the area and purchased land







from A. J. Pustejovsky and built an arena with holding pens for animals, a raised platform for the announcer and judges, concession stands, and an area for cowboys and cowgirls to warm up for their events. West citizens called the area the "Rodeo Grounds", but there would be many other festivities held there in West's

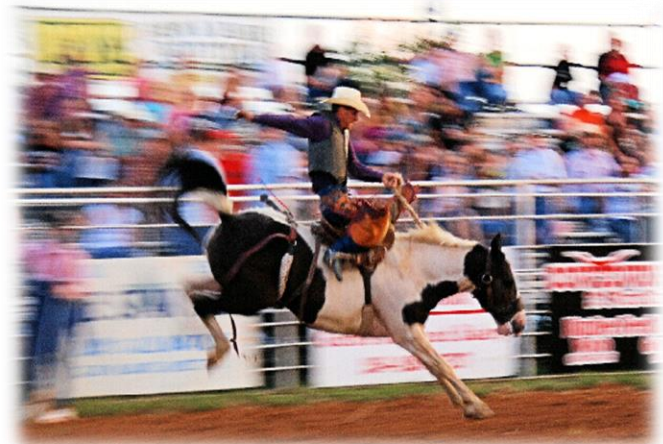
future of sharing fun times with family and friends. Now for nearly 70 years the West Rodeo has kicked off the weekend with a colorful parade led by the West Longhorn Club showcasing beautiful horses, riding clubs from all over Central Texas, the West High School Marching Band, and the funniest rodeo clowns ever. The businesses downtown celebrate each August with employees wearing western hats, blue jeans, cowboy boots, and fancy snap-buttoned western shirts to complete the "Wild West" tradition.



✪ *The Grand Entrance starts each of the three nights with a beautiful display of horsemanship.*



✪ *Rodeo parade gals enjoy "old time West!"*



✪ *Cowboys must stay on 8 seconds to win big money.*

## **West:** Could it have become just a sleepy little Texas town?

The years following World War II seemed happy enough when West's soldiers came marching home. Families grew larger but many returning veterans moved to larger cities in search of better jobs and educational opportunities. Young people in general felt they could make more money with jobs in other cities after high school, and many moved away to go to college and did not return to West. Farming the family farm with several siblings did not bring enough income since operating costs increased and crop prices decreased.

Many farmers sold their blackland prairie farms to larger farming operations, and in 1955 many families relocated to Waco where men and women could work at the new, large General Tire, a plant where passenger car tires were made. Tires were supplied to General Motors, a huge automobile assembly plant in Arlington near the brand-new supersized Six Flags Over Texas amusement park. Driving back and forth from West took up too much time even with a better highway. Moving to Waco or the Dallas area seemed like a better idea, but it was not easy to leave a peaceful and caring community. Many vowed to save up money so they could return to West to retire, but with more young people leaving, the population in West began to decline, or grow smaller.



### Did the *Kolache* Save West?

West may have seemed like a sleepy little town, "boring", as some young people called it, but one unique part of our city that no other place nearby could claim was our "Czechness"! A study done by students at Sam Houston State University in 1972, found that 75% of the City of West population was, in some part, Czech! It is no wonder then that West became home to the first all-Czech bakery in the state of Texas, when in 1952, W. O. and Georgia Morris Montgomery opened The Village Bakery on Oak Street. The family-owned bakery still remains open for business today, and as more travelers stopped for Czech pastries, more Czech bakeries opened.

The *kolache* craze did not happen right away, and several factors played into its popularity. First of all, the old pathway of cattle drives and pioneer trails had



been turned into Texas **State Highway 77-81** in **1933**, which has remained the most popular roadway cutting through the middle of Texas, north and south. When your class goes out to the playground this week, remember our first activity learning about how West had no huge highway. Imagine again, but on a smaller scale, the **building of a four-lane interstate highway (I-35)** for the first time through West in **1958**. As more and more folks owned cars and traveled, they soon heard about **what happens when you take the exit at West, Texas!**

Many travelers stopped at West because they had heard about the **kolaches**, **good food** served at the cafes and the **fresh meats and tasty sausages** at local markets downtown. Of course, it was a little joke to "head east to go to West", but east was the way up Oak Street to cross the MKT Railroad tracks and find Cash Meat Market or Nemecek's to buy sausages. When the Montgomerys at Village Bakery decided to **mix the two** favorite treats--sausage and kolache--together, something magical happened! **The klobasniki was born!**



*\*In the Czech language, one (of these pastries) is called a **Kolač**: the little "v" (called a hacek) over the last letter makes it sound like our "ch"--Kolach. The plural: "Kolaches" in English and "Kolaché" in Czech. **What is a kolach?** A Central European/Czech pastry famous across the Lone Star State, the kolache is prized for its soft, slightly sweet dough and different fillings, such as cherry, apricot, or poppyseed. Some are less sweet with cream cheese, cottage cheese or fruit and cream cheese. Sausage kolaches are "klobasnikis"( pronounced klo-boss-sneaky). The sausage has a spicy smoked flavor, and Texans have added cheese, jalapeno sausage, or sauerkraut. **Which one is your favorite?***

In the past our city has had many bakeries, such as Kolacek Kolache Kitchen, Sulak's Cafe, Nors Bakery, Gerik Bakery, Little Czech Bakery, and Slovacek's. Church groups, such as the Catholic Daughters of America (CDA) and KJZT, have bake sales with members gathering at the church kitchen to make kolaches using the handed down recipes from their Czech ancestors. With so many kolache lovers traveling far distances to satisfy their cravings, city leaders start thinking: "Hmm...*Maybe West should have a kolache festival?*" More about that later!

*Which flavor kolache do you like? If you've never tasted one, you must be a new student!*

## West ISD Expands to Include All Learners

Although not as many people lived in West during 1950s and 1960s, it was still a wonderful place for families and children to live. The high school athletes were building up to district titles, but it was the **Dunbar Dragons** that visited the **state football playoffs** for three years, finally bringing home the **State Title in 1959**. Prior to that great victory, the Dunbar High School **Girls Track Team** won the **State Championship in Track and Field Events** in **1957**, while the **Boys Track Team** brought home the **Dragon's gold in 1953**. At the West High School campus, the **Trojanettes (Lady Trojans)** won the **1963 Girls State Basketball Championship** at the state tournament in Austin, Texas.



- ★ *This classic sign from the 1960s was a delight to see at night when Dunbar School turned on its neon lights. The dragon's tail would whip around when the dragon blew neon "fire" out of its mouth! Victory!*

[\(See more on Dunbar School in the Extras Section.\)](#)



West Independent School District began to expand and remodel its buildings at the elementary and high school campuses to bring all the community together. African-American school children from Grades 1-12 at the Dunbar School were welcomed to the bigger campuses, as well as their beloved leaders, Professor and Mrs. M. O. Robinson and Agriculture teacher Mr. Richard Griffin. Also joining the West Trojan family were school children from the surrounding smaller towns of Gholson, Ross, and Tours. West Elementary and Junior High had classes at the present WES campus. West High School had already added Science Labs and a large Homemaking department in 1957, but with the larger classes, a new gym, band hall, and classroom annex were built between 1965 and 1967. Under the leadership of Superintendent M.F. Kruse, the district enrollment was over 1,000 students. West ISD was now large enough to become a 2A Division School, able to compete with the larger schools of Hillsboro, McGregor, Cameron, and the Waco area's Connally, Midway, and LaVega.



**State Champ Trojanettes!** Front L to R: Margaret Cocek, Karlene Gassaway, Diana Reddell, Shirley Marek, Rose Ann Scott, Sylvia Eiland. Standing L to R: **Coach Mary Synder**, Marie Eiland, Jo Ann King, Judy Mears, Kathleen Donaldson, Martha King, Judy Coffey, Barbara Jaska, Betty Dujka, Martha Hutyra, Carol Schutza, Jo Ann Sparks, Mgr. Patsy Piscacek  
*Notice the State Girls UIL AA Championship Trophy along with Regional and District trophies.*

*Use the Portal to Texas History as a primary source!*



You can read past issues of the West News in the Portal to Texas History! See the **ACTIVITIES** section of this book for the key to opening your own portal!  
 Enjoy the discoveries!

## Fun Just Being a Kid in West



★ Gerik's Enco Little League Team in the 1960's

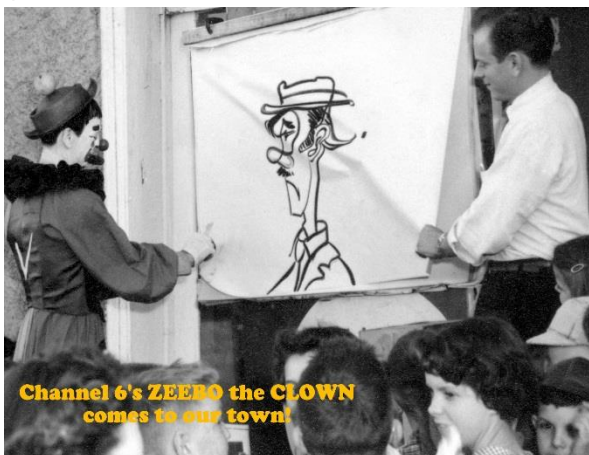
Growing up "back then" was part of the **best in West for kids!** Great friendships were made at church and school, and much like the celebrations in today's West—weddings, fund raisers, church picnics, and family reunions—children were part of the fun. Dads and Moms took

their youngsters along, and it was a special moment to see parents teaching their children how to dance, help sell Buddy Poppies for the veterans, or decorate bicycles or floats for parades. Music, especially accordion and piano, was another skill passed down to the kids.

Back in the 1950's and '60's, both grown-ups and children **spent more time outdoors** working in the garden, or visiting with neighbors and "company". Televisions and telephones were not as important. Cooking outside and watching the stars come out was a thrill! Of course, children wanted to play and play they did! Some **favorite outdoor**



**games** were *Hide & Seek, Kick the Can, Swing the Statue, Frozen Witch, Red Rover,* and *"IT"*. With bad weather, kids came inside to **read library books**, or played **card games**: *Crazy 8, Go Fish, Old Maid, Battle, and Poker*. **Board games** were enjoyed too, like *Monopoly, Life, and Clue*. Kids were not always angels either. **Girls made up games**: "Dress Up in Sister's Prom Dress", "Get in Mom's Makeup", and "Making Mud Pies". **Boys invented**: "Hide in the Corn Field", "Chinaberry War", and "Army". **Fishing and crawfishing** (using bacon and a piece of string) was an extra fun adventure, too.



← West kids loved watching **Zeebo** draw zeebograms on KCEN-TV but didn't know Bowan "Bo" McClellan lived in **West!**

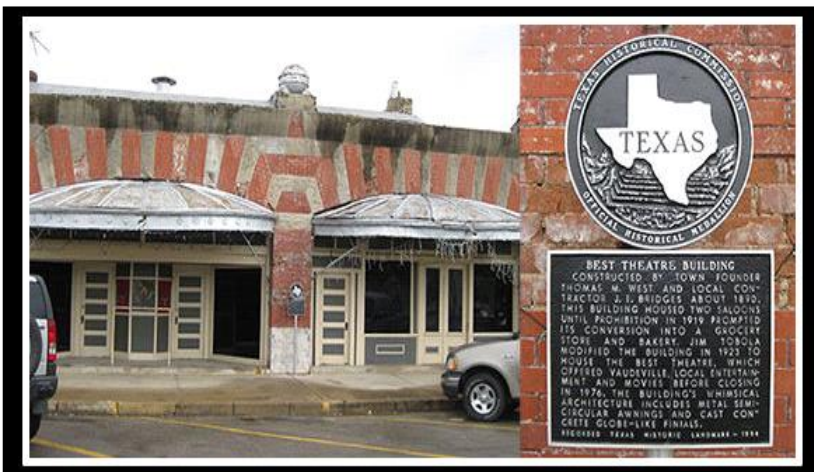


Boys and girls both liked to play **basketball**; **football** was a little too rough, so girls **jumped rope**, **practiced cheers**, and **twirled batons** since there were **no girls' ball teams** yet. **Riding bikes** with a baseball card clipped to hit the spokes was noisy fun. In the summer, kids went **swimming** at the pool, and at night they played



outside, catching "lightning bugs" and watching **Little League Baseball**. Most kids had **swing sets** and all kinds of stunts and tricks were learned from one another. Kids had pet turtles they found, "**horny toads**" in boxes, dogs, cats, and, if they lived out in the country, children usually had **farm**

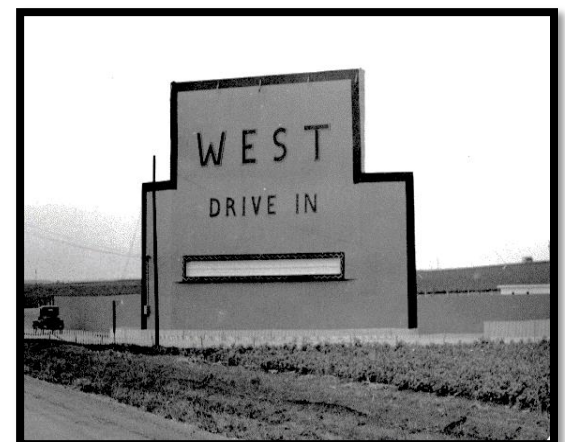
**animals** they cared for daily. One unique pet children had growing up in West was a **parakeet**. Out between West and Cottonwood was a bird farm called **Russell's Aviary**. The Russells had every kind of bird imaginable. Mrs. Jansky, a sweet lady in town, sold parakeets, cages, and supplies for the chirpy birds. To top it all, it was not too strange to see **parakeets flying around in the wild** in West!



## Let's Go To the Show!

When the **1950s** and **1960s** arrived in West, changes in the town's design from the olden days of **Thomas West's brick store fronts** and the homes of the citizens hadn't changed much. Downtown businesses and those along **Main Street** tried to

modernize with new glass doors and fresh paint, but many kept the traditional look but added **air-conditioning**. The biggest change was in **1956** when **State Highway 77/81** began enlarging to a four-lane **Interstate 35**. Businesses began to open or move west of downtown as a steady stream of traffic began to flow through Central Texas. West's **city streets were all paved** and most families owned **one car**, had **one telephone**, and owned **one** black and white **television** with 3-4 channels. The days of cell phones, video games, computers, CD's, and DVD's had not yet been invented. To see a movie, you could **drive to Waco** during the week, but on



☛ *Senior citizens can remember the West Drive In located west of West.* →

weekends, many young and old alike went to the movies here. Imagine **West** with **three places** to see movies! One of the three was **West Drive-In Theater** located on the west side of the new highway across from today's Chevrolet dealership. Another theater on Main was the **Palace**, but the last movie spot West would ever have was

**The Best Theater**. Admission was 25¢ until you turned 12, then the price doubled to 50¢. Besides seeing the featured **movie of the week**, newsreels telling of world events started off the show. Children barely watched these because they were too busy eating fresh **popped popcorn** (5¢) from the handy machine, and drinking an ice-cold "**soda-water**" in a **large glass bottle** (10¢). The owner **Mr. Jim Tobola** was very **strict about returning the glass bottles** when finished drinking the soda, but somebody would always **forget**, or get too interested in the movie that the bottle would **down the slanted concrete floor clanging and legs of the movie seats on its way down to the noise** would bring out **Mr. Jim with his flashlight**, fussing returning their a large man with a **smother** their for the glass bottles After the newsreel, a the real fun. Bugs cartoons were a the actual movie



"show". That's what everyone called movies back then. **"Wanna go to the show?"** meant going to the **Best in West**, Friday night, or Saturday or Sunday afternoon or night. The building still stands today and recently has been used for the **West High School Theater Classes** to perform plays on stage. Wouldn't it be neat for movies to show there again?

### Going "Out to Eat"

Besides four to six grocery stores downtown, West had two meat markets, the Old Corner and Wernet's Drug for ice cream, the Village Bakery, and several restaurants. Everyone's favorite "cafe" depended on what they liked to eat, but all of these places served delicious homestyle food: **Bill's Place** and **Albert's** out on the new highway, and downtown had **Friendship Cafe**, **Sulak's Cafe**, **Tip Top Cafe**, and **R & A Cafe**. West even had two "hangouts" for teenagers--**The Custard King** had great **chili dogs** and **real homemade ice cream**. It was located where the Pizza House is now. Teenagers usually stood around to talk or they would sit on the hoods of their cars because there was no place inside to sit.





The other "hang-out" was located by Muska Insurance on the corner. Circleburger served good, greasy **hamburgers** and french fries, plus it was **air-conditioned** with booths inside for sitting with friends. The best part about Circleburger was the modern technology: a **juke box**, **pinball machines**, and a **telephone booth** outside. Cool! ☺



## Teen Life was a Fun Kind of "Drag"

Teenagers in the **1960's** didn't sit too long at their favorite hangouts because they liked to see **what was going on** all over town. They had a **pattern of driving** up Oak Street and turning left at the "**new bank**" which had a clock on it to keep track of time. Then they drove one block to Circleburger, turned left and stopped at the stop sign by the Post Office. Next they turned left again back to Oak Street (where the traffic light is today) and then turned back right to **drive back down** to the new highway to make a U-turn. When **Dairy Queen** was built in about **1971** (where **Sonic** is now), the **drive-thru window** was a big hit! Driving up and down Oak Street was called "**The Drag**" and it played a big part in what teens called "**riding around**". They listened to music and visited with friends, and boys would show off their **muscle cars**--Mustangs, Camaros, and Super Sports with big engines, which used a lot of gas. Back then, teens and adults alike did not worry much about the cost of fuel, because no one drove very far!



☺ *West teens loved to ride around town on "The Drag" in the muscle cars of the 1960s.*

Opening along the new **Interstate 35** were three **full-service gas stations**. An attendant came out to the car and asked how much gas was needed. Then he would **check the air** in the car's tires, then **check the oil** and **water levels** under the hood of the car. Next, he would **clean the windshield**, take the payment, and bring back change. At **Gerik's Gas Station**, Mr. Arnold Gerik would always check to see if there were any **children or teenagers** in the car because he would give each one a **free piece of Super Bubble** chewing gum. Gas cost less than **20¢ a gallon**, so a filled tank of gas cost less than \$5, and remember, free gum for everyone! Life was, and still is good!



## West Becomes the *Czech Point of Texas*

As time marched on with fun celebrations here and a huge Czech wedding there, West, with its kolaches and fine food, was becoming very **popular**. It seemed like more and more visitors were coming to our little town, liking its **family-centered life**, and then what happened was just the fix West needed to **boost its economy** (money flow into the community). Many families that had moved away were now coming back to West. Big city life was no longer popular. Who needs rush hour traffic? Who wants to be crowded having to wait in line all the time? More and more folks wanted **the sweet life of living in West**, and the population began growing again!



Many of the **town's leaders**—business owners, church officials, civic leaders—decided West needed to be known for what had made it so **sweet**. Many events that made West popular "pointed" to the Czech culture, making the group of citizens come up with the idea that West was **THE CZECH POINT** of TEXAS! Of course, the new title was the "play on

words" of "check point", which would be easy for visitors to remember. Travelers would remember to *point* their cars to the exit off Interstate 35 (now complete with overpasses and ramps) and buy kolaches, sausages, and have lunch in



West.



❖ T. M West's brick-front buildings still represent West's earliest years.

The plan worked and more businesses opened in West using the theme of the town's Czech culture: **Czech**-American Restaurant, **Czech** Stop, Nors **Sausage** House, Old **Czech** Corner Antiques, Wild **West** Steakhouse, **Czech** Point Antiques, **Slovaceks**, Old **Czech** Smokehouse, and the big one—**Czech** Inn, a nice hotel and meeting place for parties and reunions.





## 1976: **WESTFEST** is Born!

~ A Celebration of West's Czechness ~

To carry the idea of advertising West's special culture even further, the town leaders felt like travelers would enjoy the **total** Czech experience of a festival. Seven West leaders formed a Board of Directors, with Sue Pescaia as President. Mayor Adolph Muska and the West City Council threw in their support and **WESTFEST** was born! The year was **1976** and all the planning for the first Westfest turned out to be a huge success. Held each year on **Labor Day weekend**, Westfest has drawn in as many as **35,000** happy folks to "Czech Out" West's blend of culture, dance, and food. Add to this festive weekend a huge parade downtown, arts, crafts, singing in the Czech language, Sokol Gymnastics, a Kolache Run, Czech Mass, a new kolache eating contest, carnival rides



and petting zoo for children, and what more could anyone want? Oh yes, let's not forget a Taroky Card Tournament, Horsehoe & Washer Pitch, a kolache baking contest, and polka, polka, polka! Remember what we called it earlier? West's **CZECHNESS** had stood up tall and the Texas State Legislature in Austin noticed and approved. In tribute to the town that started it all, West was designated, to represent the great state as "**The Kolache Capitol of Texas**".



✦ *The two-tailed lion with a crown upon its head is a traditional Czech symbol of power, freedom, and royalty.*



✦ *Friends and family enjoy flapping their wings to the Chicken Dance Polka!*

## The Celebration Continues!



❖ *West Junior Historians polka away!*



❖ *Dreaming to be Miss Westfest!*



❖ *Kolace Baking Contest!*

The success of Westfest made a huge difference in community pride. Students at West High School belonging to Coach Milton Morgan's West Junior Historians began dancing the traditional dances of the Czech and German cultures for Westfest and have performed all over the state of Texas. Wearing the cultural dress of the Czech Republic, they perform in pairs with ribbons curling, skirts swishing, and boots stomping.

Many organizations work yearlong to set up decorated booths selling Czech sausage on a stick, sandwiches with tasty meats and sauerkraut, and cold drinks to quench the crowd's thirst in the Labor Day heat. Grammy award-winning band Brave Combo has kept up the tempo with their zany mix of polka and Latino rhythms since the very first Westfest in 1976. For nearly 40 years, the little town that was once considered "sleepy" has been kicking up its heels with positive effects, such as economic (money) growth, and the love of the community pulling together to build and keep West strong.

With over 100,000 daily travelers streaming past West's doorstep on I-35, hundreds take the West exit daily to enjoy the break from the fast-paced highway. Visitors can stay the night at the Czech Inn, fill up with gas at the internationally known Czech Stop, grab a ring or two of Nemecek bologna or custom-made sausage at Slovacek's. But the best of West does not just rest on the newly upgraded I-35 service roads. Visitors should head east to downtown West where they can find more restaurants, and pick up dessert at the first Czech bakery in Texas! The aroma of fresh kolaches and klobasnikis drifts across the street to the newest kid on T. M. West's block—The History of West Museum! For even more West history, a quick tour of the Groppe Building (Old Czech Corner Antiques) on the corner is well-worth a visit just to see Mr. West's homemade bricks and look



★ *History of West Ribbon Cutting Ceremony June 2015—OPEN!*



down into the original cistern (water well) inside! Folks from out of town can cruise through West and notice upgrades in West's Volunteer Fire Station, newly paved roads, new "Big Red" street signs, and superior schools — nationally recognized with a Bronze Award for the students of West's high academic performance!

*(Please see the last pages in honor of our State Championship baseball and softball teams!)*

All of these places to visit have been boosted to another level by West becoming the "Czech Heritage Capital of Texas", home of the "Official Kolache of the Texas Legislature", the home of Westfest and the **home of state champions**. To top it all, West belongs to over 2,500 wonderful citizens of many cultures who are proud to call West "**home**". Even Mr. T. M. West and our city's founding families from 1850 into the 20<sup>th</sup> century could stroll along the streets of downtown West today and recognize that their hometown is still alive and well! ★ **WEST IS BEST!** ★

*West's history remains alive in our minds and beating in our hearts!*

**Yes, we live in West and we are blessed!**



Can you find these buildings on page 16?

*~No one really moves away from this town ~ Even though you might not live in West one day, your heart will never leave it.*

★ Compiled & written by ♥ **Margie Mashek Davis** for the Children of West, Texas

© *Library of Congress Reg. Txu1-959-409; 1-2957599661* ★ [margied333@gmail.com](mailto:margied333@gmail.com)

# Explore More History of West Here!



Head east to go to West!



Can you believe this is **MAIN STREET** in West? This photo was taken in the early 1900's before "Front Street" was paved to be State Highway 2. *If you were standing taking this photo, do you know where you would be?* (Hint: The street name is a fir tree we see at Christmas. It starts with an S. The street runs in front of St. Mary's School & Parish Center.)

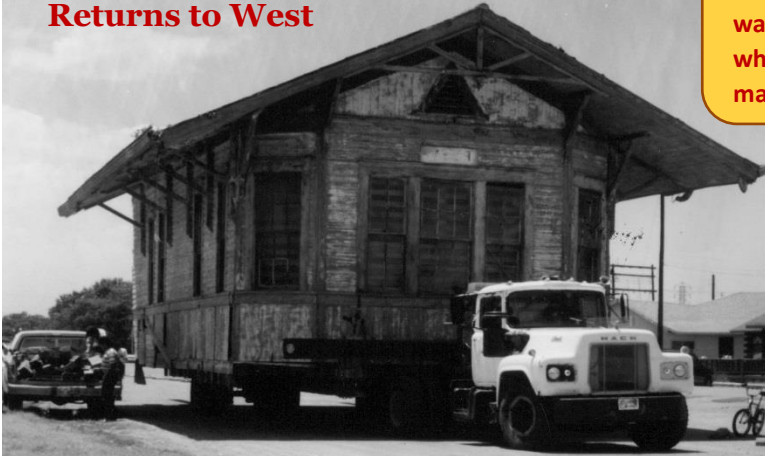
See "West Station"? The Katy Depot was moved 2 blocks north to where it stands now.

*Who knows what Front Street was named after it was no longer State Highway 2?*

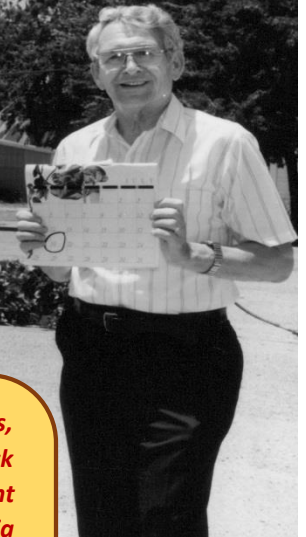


## West's History: Recorded by the Urbanovsky Family for Over 100 Years

### Katy Depot Returns to West



Danny Urbanovsky, shown holding a calendar instead of a camera, was West's best historian. Since he worked at Katy Depot as a boy, he was excited when it was restored at its current location. That's just what West loved about Danny and Lil Urbanovsky—they enjoyed making West and West folks look so good! THANKS!

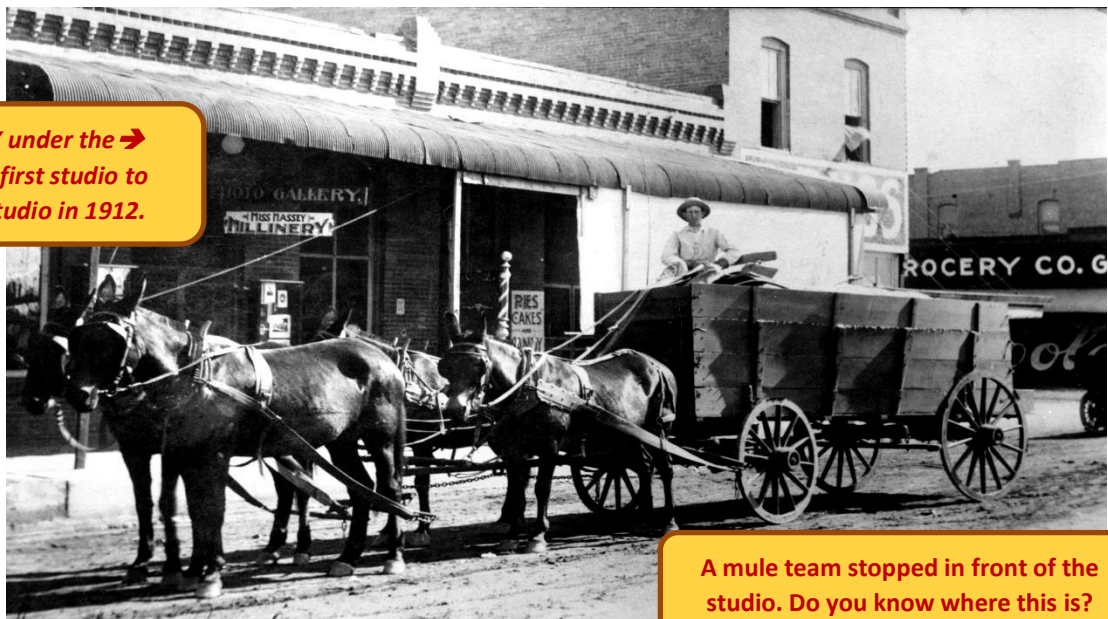


*Danny Urbanovsky was West's best photographer ever! Danny captured precious moments of weddings, school events, organizations, and progress in the City of West. He made West folks comfortable with his quick wit, bright smile, and artistic style. When West was very young, Danny's great-uncle Henry A. Maresh bought Johnson Studio in 1912, then passed his art down to Danny's dad, Dan Urbanovsky, Sr. Dan and wife Lydia (Maresh) both worked in capturing West's progress and families through the camera's eye, and in 1946, son Danny joined in the business ultimately becoming West's chief photographer! Danny and his wife Lillian (Bezdek) continued the studio business until Danny passed in 2012.*

★ Do the math: How many years was the studio's life-span? ★

Be sure to stop by the Urbanovsky Studio Gallery at the History of West Museum for the whole story!

See the word **GALLERY** under the → awning? This was the first studio to become Urbanovsky Studio in 1912.



A mule team stopped in front of the studio. Do you know where this is?



## ★ Immigration from Europe ★

← One of these ships in the photograph is said to be the *Weser*, a ship traveling from Bremen, Germany, the port chosen by most German and Czech immigrants to board ships traveling to America. "Do Ameriky" (going to America) was written in church records beside the names of many Czech church members as a record of their life's journeys. Czech and German families boarding on the *Weser* faced a month or longer traveling across the Atlantic Ocean in all kinds of weather. Many of the *Weser*'s passengers became seasick as well as homesick, but there were compassionate passengers who were kind and cared for their fellow travelers. *Steerage* was a lower level open-cabin area for passengers who could not afford private rooms like those seen on such movies as *Titanic*. Steerage areas were often crowded and sometimes bad tempers would flair up, but usually the passengers held on to their "American Dream"—Life was soon to be happy with the promise of freedom and a new home for the family. Travel to the USA from Bremen did not always end in New York City. Ships also landed in Baltimore, Maryland, and Boston, Massachusetts. Some Czech families (not all) sailed to Galveston, Texas, from these northern seaboard cities, while research at a popular ancestry website found that Czech families also traveled to Illinois cities such as Chicago and the farming community of Aurora. Still many Czech families kept heading "west"- but not

"our West"! The information below is a sample taken from a ship's list of passengers. You can see that passengers #655-660 were probably one family from Bohemia, a state then in Austria, but now a state in the Czech Republic. You can also see that the name in handwriting probably looked like SAUKUP, when it was probably the common name SOUKUP, a name we are familiar with in West.

### Immigrant Ships ~ Transcribers Guild

★ This site is for ALL immigrants who traveled to the USA by ship. TRY IT! ★

[www.immigrantships.net](http://www.immigrantships.net)

#### Steamer *Weser*

Bremen, Germany to New York, New York

5 October 1867

#### DISTRICT OF NEW YORK - PORT OF NEW YORK

List or Manifest of ALL THE PASSENGERS taken on board the *Steamer Weser* whereof G. Wenke is Master, from Bremen, burthen 2871 tons.

Columns represent: given name, surname, age, sex, occupation, the country to which they severally belong, the country of which they intend to become inhabitants, and the compartment occupied during the voyage.

655*	Wenzel	Saukup	55	M		Bohemia	U.S.
656*	Anna	Saukup	54	F		Bohemia	U.S.
657*	Anna	Saukup	29	F		Bohemia	U.S.
658*	Cathr.	Saukup	28	F		Bohemia	U.S.
659*	Franz	Saukup	18	M		Bohemia	U.S.
660*	Jos.	Saukup	8y6m	M		Bohemia	U.S.

An asterisk (\*) indicates either difficulty in deciphering the handwriting of the manifest or something in the Transcriber's Notes to which the reader should refer.

\*655-660 Surname is either "Saukup" or "Soukup".



## Dunbar School ~ 1923 - 1965



In 1927, Dunbar School together with other West Public Schools ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in the Best of Texas Public Schools.

Dunbar School, a West Public School, opened in **1923**, and served the **African-American children of West** in Grades 1-12. The campus block's main classroom building was located on the corner of Pine and Harrison Streets and a large gym was built on the end of North College Street, behind the playground. The students were taught by well-respected educators **Professor & Mrs. M. O. Robinson, Mrs. Alzada Young, Mr. Archie Lee Griggs, Coach D. V. Johnson, Mrs. Martha Rafford, and Mr. Richard Griffin**. As well as excelling in their classes, the **Dunbar Dragons** won several **state titles** in football, basketball, and track. (*See more information in the West Public Schools history.*) Because of *segregation*, the students competed in scholastic and athletic events through the **PrairieView University Interscholastic League** until the **1960s** when all area schools **joined together** as West Independent School District. Today, the Dunbar School main classroom building you see in the photo from **1948**, has been preserved as the **Mary E. Howard Community Center**. The original playground is now the M. O. Robinson Playground, while the gym is still known as the M. O. Robinson Gym. Many West residents remember the **famous neon lights** of the brilliantly colorful **Dunbar Dragon** sign. The sign, now without neon, is displayed in the M.O. Robinson Playground, but "back in the day", it was an exciting site to behold! *At dusk the DRAGON's glowing twitching tail would flip back & forth and its hot fiery dragon's breath would SHOOT out of its mouth lighting up the evening sky! A wonderful memory for West's children not so long ago –*



**West's Historical Marker at City Hall**  **Bold Springs Cemetery Marker**



**WEST** — This community traces its origin to the establishment by entrepreneur Thomas M. West of a stagecoach stop, dry goods store and post office here in the late 1860s. Known as the Bold Springs settlement, these commercial structures were built on a section of the "Dallas Road" leading to West's Ranch property. Early Anglo-American settlers were soon drawn to the area by its abundance of good water and the availability of rich wooded prairie blackland.

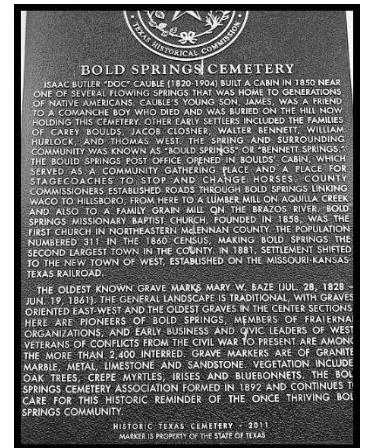
In 1880 the Missouri, Kansas, & Texas (Katy) Railroad erected a depot at Bold Springs and in 1882 the name of the community was changed to West in honor of Thomas West. The coming of the railroad and the emergence of cotton production in the 1880s attracted many Czech and German immigrants to this area.

By 1900 the town had become the economic and cultural center of the thriving farming region of northeastern McLennan County. The community soon added its first newspaper, bank, volunteer fire department, and its first block of brick buildings. By 1910 West was a bustling town of about 2000 people. Since then the community has experienced slow but steady growth. *Westfest*, an annual event since 1976, celebrates the community's Czech heritage.

*Texas State Historical Marker – 1993*



**BOLD SPRINGS**— Isaac Butler "Doc" Cauble (1820—1904) built a cabin in 1850 near one of several flowing springs that was home to generations of Native Americans. Cauble's young son, James, was a friend to a Comanche boy who died and was buried on the hill now holding this cemetery. Other early settlers included the families of Carey Boulds, Jacob Closner, Walter Bennett, William Hurlock, and Thomas West. The spring and surrounding community was known as "Bould Springs" or "Bennett Springs". The Bould Springs Post Office opened in Boulds' cabin, which served as a community gathering place and a place for stagecoaches to stop and change horses. County Commissioners established roads through Bold Springs linking Waco to Hillsboro, from here to a lumber mill on Aquilla creek and also to a family grain mill on the Brazos River. Bold Springs Missionary Baptist Church, founded in 1858, was the first church in northeastern McLennan County. The population numbered 311 in the 1860 census, making Bold Springs the second largest town of the county in 1881. Settlement shifted to the new town of West, established on the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad.



The oldest known grave marks Mary W. Baze (Jul. 28, 1828–Jun. 1861). The general landscape is traditional, with graves oriented east-west and the oldest graves in the center sections. Here are pioneers of Bold Springs, members of fraternal organizations and early business and civic leaders of West. Veterans of conflicts from the Civil War to present are among the more than 2,400 interred. Grave markers are of granite, marble, metal, limestone, and sandstone. Vegetation includes oak trees, crepe myrtles, irises, and bluebonnets. The Bold Springs Cemetery Association formed in 1892, and continues to care for this historic reminder of the once thriving Bold Springs Community.

*Historic Texas Cemetery – 2011*



## Texas State Historical Map Shows the True Chisholm Trail



**Students:** The red area on the map is where cowboys and cattle companies rounded up cattle, either free range-roving animals they found or cattle they bought and would sell by the pound once they reached their destination. The cattle were all to be moved north to bigger companies to provide beef and livestock to other areas of the United States. The Chisholm Trail was the most popular route north because of fresh springs and creeks for a water supply. Tall grasses also grew along the trails so the livestock could graze and arrive in a fattened up condition, which meant more pay for cattle companies and cowboys. Once the cattle reached Waco and crossed the Brazos River, the cattle drives were then split up according to where the cattle would be sold. (Find the spot on the map) The original Chisholm Trail veered left towards Ft. Worth, onward through Oklahoma to their destination in Kansas. Cattle moving east veered right onto the Shawnee Trail through "Bold Springs", to Dallas, and through eastern Oklahoma to Missouri where the cattle would be delivered to the cattle markets in the eastern United States. Chances are that both herds were driven through the Bold Springs area to water the cattle before splitting, which is why many local area historians believe the Chisholm Trail ran through the West area.

**Thomas West** drove his cattle south instead of north! His ranch near Denton, north of Dallas, was often visited by Comanche who kept stealing his cattle in the night. He was fed up with fighting so he headed south to a place he called a "paradise." You are standing in his paradise now!

**Challenge:** Why did the cattle trail drives end?

# PLAYDIUM POOL! TRADITION SINCE THE SUMMER OF 1946



Many West kids learned how to swim in the “Baby Pool”.



Buddy Poteet flies over West with a swan dive.



After World War II came to a peaceful end, West needed more than a few baseball games to keep it interesting during the hot summers. August Dulock had the idea to build a large swimming pool since his land already had a freshwater spring (historic Callen’s Grove spring) that provided cool clean water by the gallons daily. When the Playdium was completed in 1946, it was advertised as the largest man-made pool in Texas. It’s possible that the current owners can still claim that honor since modern waterparks were made with high-tech machinery. West pool still remains “cool”. Where else can you ride a trolley across a wide span of blue water, dive from one of the highest boards in Texas, swim from island to island, shoot baskets, and then dry off and dig in to a plate of homemade cheese fries? 😊

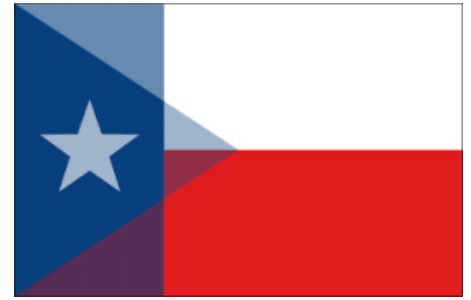
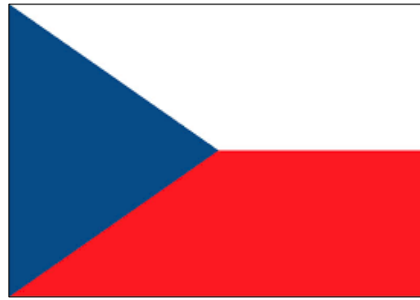
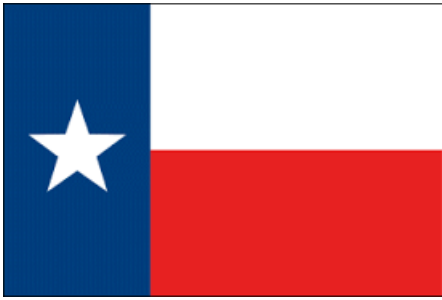
~Urbanovsky Photos



The “Big Pool” has a deep end of 11 feet by the diving boards. Kids used to roller skate and dance in the hall.



## Good Friends on the Other Side of the World are Unique to West



With all the activities in West tied to the “old world” of the **Czech Republic**, visitors might wonder how we **stay in touch** with a country on the **other side of the planet**. For one, many **West families travel** to the Czech Republic to see the country where their ancestors once lived, some meeting cousins who welcome them into their homes and villages. When Czechs come to **visit Texas** they are also warmly **welcomed in**



**West**, because our city has a **special someone** who is more than just a friend to the Czech Republic.

**Mr. Raymond J. Snokhous** serves both the State of Texas and the Czech Republic as **Honorary Consul General Emeritus**. **WOW!** What in the world does that mean? Mr. Snokhous, along with his wife **Clarice Marik Snokhous**, assists, helps, and protects citizens of the Czech Republic, if needed, when they visit the state of Texas. **Emeritus** means “for life”, so it’s a **lifelong friendship** they enjoy keeping. The community of West benefits from a close relationship with the Czech Republic—the eastern European country from which up to 75% of West’s population has “family roots” or ancestry.



After our town was damaged by the explosion, **Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka** told Mr. Snokhous that **helping West was the #1 news item** and the top social media topic in the “homeland.” The Czechs wanted to help West stay “West.” Learning how **Sokol West** promoted Czech culture through physical fitness, the Czech Republic generously donated over **\$200,000** to Sokol West to build a **new gymnasium**. **Prime Minister Sobotka presented the donation** at the groundbreaking ceremony in November 2014. In November 2015 **Czech Ambassador Petr Gandalovic** and **Governor Greg Abbott** attended the ribbon cutting for the new gym telling members and citizens, “**You represent the best of Texas.**” (See story on p.53.)

So, **how can West return the favor?** We already have through the work of Mr. Snokhous several years ago when he assisted the country in **changing its government from Communist** to becoming a **Republic** (which means the daily lives of the Czechs were no longer controlled by a ruling state). Mr. Snokhous traveled to the **former Czechoslovakia**, the **newly-named Czech Republic** to help **make the transition** (change over) in several areas. Mainly he taught them how to set up **better power and energy sources for electricity and fuels**, such as gas for their vehicles. Mr. Snokhous also worked towards **West’s Sister City** partnership with the city of **Kunovice**.



The Czech Republic has made it known how much they appreciate the work of Mr. Snokhous in helping transform their country into a much better place to live. When their government **officials come to Texas on business**, they insist on traveling to **West** to visit and to bring our town gifts, such as the **Czech flag** for our new museum. In return, Mr. and Mrs. Snokhous invite the Czechs to stay in their home, and they make sure West’s visitors **all receive cowboy hats** and enjoy delicious Texas barbeque! **Ray and Clarice Snokhous** are happy to lend a helping hand **across the Atlantic Ocean** and in Texas, as well. In return, **West receives a helping hand back**.

☆☆☆ **Isn’t it nice to know West is blessed on the other side of the world?** ☆☆☆

# Sokol Gymnastics: A Tradition Renewed From Prague to West



*Sokol gymnastics was an active community of West & Penelope boys and girls back in the 1920s.*



Children may begin Sokol at age 3 and there is no cut-off age. All cultures are welcomed!

**Sokol!** Just say the word and your mind leaps, flips, and jumps on a padded gym floor! For Sokol members in **West**, the padded floor sits in a new gymnasium on Davis Street where their original gym once stood. Thanks to a generous donation by the Czech Republic, **Sokol West** gym is up and running and the members are excited. (See the related story on page 52)

The word **Sokol** is **Czech** for **FALCON**, a swift bird full of energy and a symbol for an active, strong life. The Sokol Gymnastics Association of West began its current membership in **1980**, and used M.O. Robinson Gym until **1988**, when contributors such as **Westfest Inc.**, local businesses, and individuals made it possible for the members to develop skills in gymnastics in a place to call their own.

Sokol gymnastics is another way West children and adults **keep a connection** with the Czech Republic,

since the organization was formed in the capital of **Bohemia—Prague**, in

**1862**. Not only does Sokol dedicate itself to physical ability, but also to education and cultural tradition. The Sokol tradition crossed the Atlantic Ocean and came to the USA in **1865**. By **1908** the **first Sokol** in Texas was formed in Ennis, a nearby town also rich in the Czech culture where **Sokol West** meets for “**slets**”—demonstrations of individual or team achievement in physical strength.

At the 2015 ribbon cutting ceremony, the celebration was double fun with a visit from Czech Ambassador **Petr Gandalovic** in **exactly one year** from the groundbreaking ceremony with Czech **Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka**. In one year’s time, Sokol West also had **both Governors Rick Perry** and **Greg Abbott** to praise how **Sokol West** bounced back into action—**swift and full of energy!**



November 20, 2014 ~ Breaking Ground

November 20, 2015 ~ Ribbon Cutting ~ Sokol flies again!



Nov. 20, 2014, with Czech Ambassador & Governor Rick Perry



Nov. 20, 2015  
One year later!



# West Boys Scout Troop 494: Building Leaders for Tomorrow's West



We can spot leaders in this photo from the early 1970s! Two scout leaders (in plain clothes) Paul Svacek & Harry Volcik, are currently architects building the new West High & Middle Schools. Medical Dr. Dennis Meurer stands 3<sup>rd</sup> from left. David Snokhous (standing 3<sup>rd</sup> from right) is a successful coach & educator for Spring ISD, Pete Miller (2nd standing on right) works in law enforcement. Eddie Snokhous (2<sup>nd</sup> kneeling right) works in metal construction. Jim Gerik (kneeling 3<sup>rd</sup> from right) recently produced the documentary film *The Day West Shook Texas*. Far left bottom roll is West ISD School Board officer Larry Hykel. (Sure wish we knew what all these West Scouts have accomplished!) Troop Leader Jerry Cocek (in red) holds the flag in the photo to the right. ➡

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

😊 All smiles in this happy group of West Boy Scouts in the mid-1940s. Town leaders on the top row are two tall Lednický brothers. Jerry Cocek, (troop leader in photo above) is holding the American flag. One other leader spotted in this photo is past West Mayor William "Boiley" Pareya who stands hatless, 8th from the flag.



## What Does It Take to Be an EAGLE SCOUT?

Working towards the ultimate honor of being an Eagle Scout is a giant step to a successful future. The title itself opens the door to great opportunities. Scouts must first earn 24 Merit Badges that round out the candidate's leadership qualities, such as Emergency

Preparedness, CPR, Communication, Water Safety, Healthful Cooking, Personal Fitness, the all-important Citizenship in the Community, the Nation, and the World, and

more. The Eagle Scout must then manage a project to improve the West community from beginning to end, interviewing citizens of the West area to find out what improvements are needed. Upon deciding on the best project, the scout draws up plans, calculates the costs for materials, and decides how to manage and pay for the project. Next comes the real challenge: the Eagle Scout has to convince his fellow scouts to complete the project by doing the actual work. He must set up a work schedule and be in charge of the whole process with transportation, food, and who does what, when, and where. Once his team of scouts agree, the job begins. In the past Eagle Scouts have successfully indexed gravesites for U.S. Veterans at Bold Springs and St. Mary's Cemetery. Another project at St. Mary's was to provide storage areas for tools and water hoses. In nearby Lacy-Lakeview one Eagle Scout made improvements and provided supplies at the Rainbow Room, a safe haven for families in need.



🇺🇸 BSA #494 PROUD!



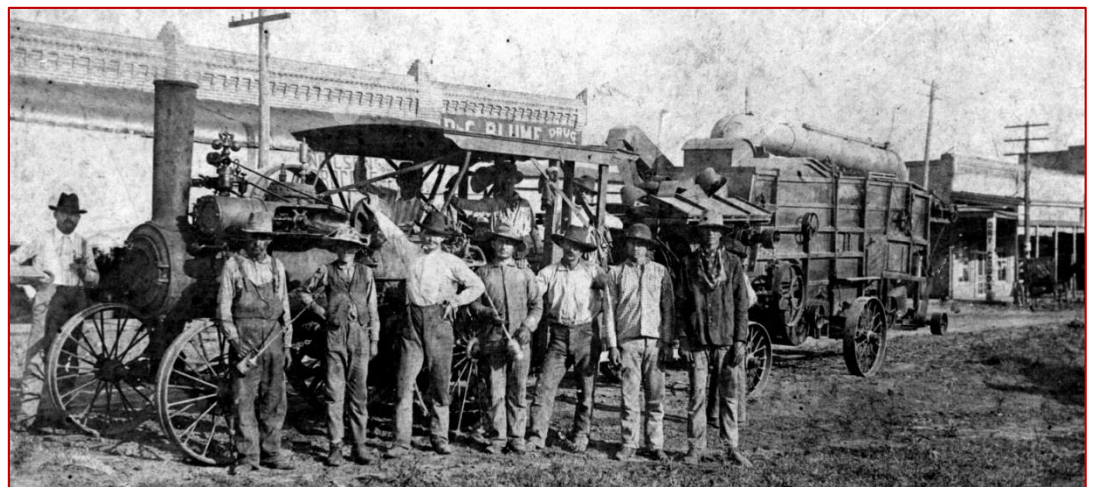
★★★BEST OF WEST'S PHOTO FIRSTS FROM THE PAST★★★

West's best photographer **Danny Urbanovsky** takes a breath and sits down among the **Miss West** beauties from the past. They were honored in the **WestFest Parade** in **1993** making that 60 years ago for the first Miss West. She's the 80 year- old beauty **in red** standing closest to Danny **Mary Eleanor Morgan Mashek** ★★ ★ **Miss West 1933** ★★ ★ ➔



←★Miss West 2015★  
**Miss Holly Soukup**

★★★★★★★★★★  
Looking closely at this ➔ photo you will notice these **farmers** parked in the middle of town to inspect the Tobola family's **new** equipment — a **STEAM ENGINE!** The engine gave power to the **thresher** behind it which cleaned and separated the grain from the rest of the plant. Together the engine and thresher replaced several field workers who had separated the tiny wheat grains by hand. **New technology in 1900!** 🌟 **Do you know what farm machine we use today to separate grain?**



1st UIL Sweepstakes Band: Marching, Concert, & Sightreading  
West High School 1970 - 1971

**1970-'71**—The first West High School Band to win **solid 1<sup>st</sup>** ratings in UIL Marching, Concert, & Sight Reading Contests!



# VITAME VAS NA WEST!

WELCOME TO WEST!



The entrance into West has been dressed up to welcome visitors to our unique town.

In August 2015, the Texas Department of Transportation decorated the overpasses of Interstate 35 with scenes of cultural dancing embraced by the celebrated Czech festival Westfest, held every Labor Day weekend. Even the local Sonic flies the Mighty West Trojan colors of red and black! *Who knows where the "comma" goes?* West folks have joked that when someone asks about their hometown, they often have to say: "West Comma Texas" to keep it distinct from the area of west Texas!

📷 Photo Quilt & all photos by Margie Mashek Davis 2015

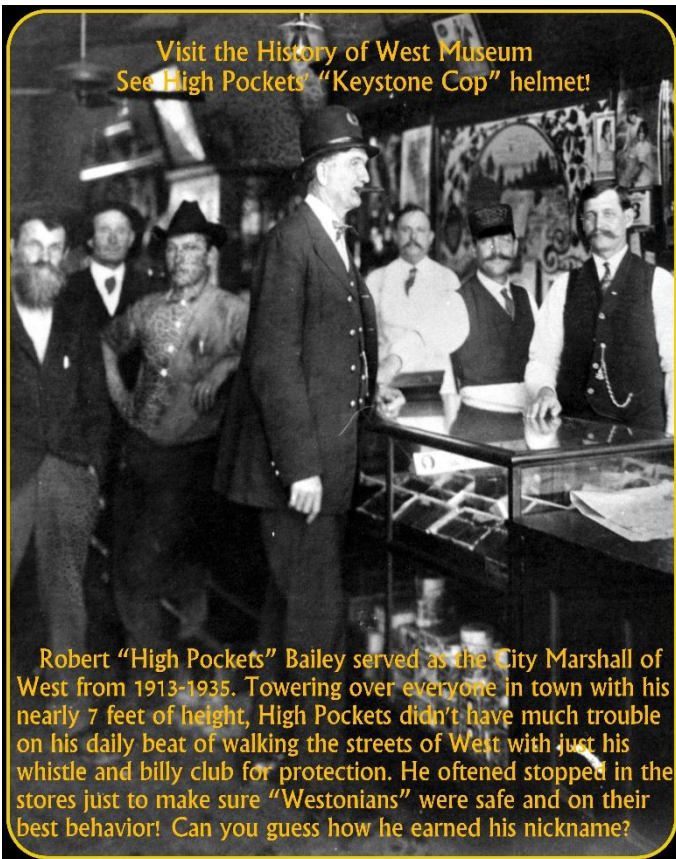
# WEST IS BEST!

## Project - based Group Activities 🌟 TABLE OF CONTENTS

- *Instructions for Making the Mural of West "Before Us"*
- *So, Where in West Texas Do You Live?*
- *New Name for West Mock Election*
- *Welcome to the City of West!*
- *Play-doh Kolaches!*
- *Family Genealogy Fun Site for Names~All Kinds of Names!*
- *History of West Museum Field Trip (Your teacher has a checklist of what you'll see!)*
- *Welcome to the Portal to Texas History Instructions*
- *Travel to the Past with Primary Sources (This lesson will help you in college!)*
- *Can you speak Czech? A few phrases and their pronunciation!*
- *Crash at Crush Visual Links*
- *Through the Eyes of a Child ~ Oral History Narrative by Louis Garrison 1937*



Two West Gentlemen: "High Pockets" became Marshall the same year Mr. Nemec was born.



**Frank Nemec** (above) is West's oldest citizen in 2016. Being born in **1913** makes him 103 years old as this book goes to press. Mr. Nemec was a child during World War I, but he fought bravely as a U.S. Marine in World War II, which also makes him West's most precious World War II veteran. Here, he is visiting The History of West Museum on its Grand Opening Day. He loved visiting with his West friends young and old and did not mind explaining many of the museum exhibits.

🌟 🌟 **Mr. Nemec: We salute you as West's best!** 🌟 🌟  
★ **Thank you for serving our nation!** ★



# West Students! Take a Quick Look at these Fun Activities!

Hands-On Learning → Project-based Group Activities→ Technology→ Field Trip→ UIL Oral Reading→

Intro to Research & Genealogy→Music that Made History→Extended Texas History→Artwork

Read the **true story** of a little boy who came to Bold Springs & saw West come to life!

All centered on the **West** community

- **West before 1850 ~ Creating a Mural of West "Before Us"**--Students work in groups to piece together a mural of how the West area looked before the natives and settlers arrived. They will use their knowledge of earth & sky, native plant & animal life, etc. learned in social studies and science. Students make "flaps" to raise for a surprise underneath! When the poem says "No West Trojans", we'll see a lovely hill covered in bluebonnets but lift up that flap of butterflies, and you'll see.... **West Trojans!**
- **Time Travel Through the Portal of Texas History:** *The West News* has been delivering the facts for over 100 years and through the partnership of the **West Community Library** & the **University of North Texas**, students (and adults!) can read the *West Weekly News*, the Czech edition *Westske Noviny*, and *The West News* from 1911-2000. Students learn research skills with the all-important **primary source** of factual information. Plus, it's fun! (Look up your parents' birth announcement or check out how West stepped up to answer the call to duty for World War II.) <http://texashistory.unt.edu> In the blank, type in The West News & year you want to research. Click on newspaper; options included. Students can research further by exploring the oldest Texas maps & documents, Boy Scout projects, famous Texans, rodeo, horsemanship, Texas music, sports, and food!
- **"So, Where in West Texas Do You Live?"** - Students can have fun in groups discussing the unique name of West, its origin and the difficulties West folks have had trying to explain "WEST". Guided activities with a Just for Fun Election to rename our fair city! Secret ballots! The election process!  
(**No, you can't rename it EAST!**)
- **Welcome to the City of West!** Brainstorming can be fun when the clock is ticking--Which group will be the first to fill out the entire page with names of persons, places, and things with the word WEST in it (*e.g. West Community Center*) The challenge may be in properly capitalizing these proper names!
- **Kolache Baking Contest!** Students can research recipes for **play-doh** & make it in class, or some kind soul may donate supplies! The fun is in using playdoh to make kolaches! Kids can take it outside to roll their "dough" on the sidewalks. Use sand sprinkles for sugar! Tiny rocks can be pecans. Invite the lunch ladies to judge the most delectable creations. Share the fun! (*Want real kolaches? Invite Margie Davis to view your creations & she may surprise you!*)
- **Family Education** offers a fun and **safe genealogy website** for kids. One neat idea is to click on **Name Lab** which tells students the origin of their last names. It's all positive feedback. There's all sorts of name trivia; some sites slide in quick lessons with roots, prefixes & suffixes.  
<http://genealogy.familyeducation.com/surname-origin/>
- **Practice-Enter UIL Oral Reading** with the *Little Indian Boy Poem*. A sure winner!
- **Witness the Crash at Crush video:** **YouTube.com** has several safe sites listed in the local history guide. Perhaps the favorite will be Scott Joplin's original masterpiece he wrote-*The Crash at Crush March*. Watch a pianist play the march with Joplin's style, sheet music, and fingering charts! Let's march! Mrs. Price, WES music teacher, has these great sites ready!
- **Ultimate Field Trip! Walking History! Let's go to the History of West Museum!** This is more than a field trip. Students can explore buildings in downtown West-comparing the colors of bricks T.M. West had made from local dirt! Read the historical markers! Go inside buildings featured in the curriculum guide. Arrange to step across Oak Street for yummy kolaches and see more historic photos. The History of West Museum is at your service! Details are in the local community history guide. A checklist of all the cool sites you'll see is in your teacher's book. This field trip may be the highlight of the year! Bring your family on a Saturday and show them the history that made West best! **IT'S FREE!**

## Before Us ~

Close your eyes and imagine what you would see if you were a child here in 1850!

No West Trojans  
No Big Red and Black  
No freight trains stuck on the railroad track~  
  
Not any churches  
Not any schools  
Not any playing fields or a cool blue pool ~  
  
Before the cotton  
Before any corn  
Before T. M. West was even born~  
  
No cherry kolaches  
No sausage on the grill  
No um-pah music for a Saturday night thrill~  
  
Not any grand parades  
No Friday bus trips  
Way before Our People came over on ships~  
  
No I--35  
Not one truck or car  
Light only shined from the sun or the stars.  
  
No sounds but the wind,  
The wild, and the free.  
This is the spot where West would be.  
  
What if dinosaurs roamed here?  
What if meteors blazed by?  
Did buffalo graze the tall grasses so high?  
  
When bubbling Bold Springs  
Brought the pioneers here,  
Rich earth was broken; a few trees were cleared.  
  
These new farms grew families,  
And these families grew love.  
A community bonded with help from Above.  
  
When our earliest ancestors  
Planted roots and settled down,  
This moment marked the start of our hometown.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Instructions

### ★ Starting the Mural Project ★

Have students **underline** the items that will be placed UNDER the window flap. **Highlight** the things that can be drawn in the natural landscape of West's countryside **before** anybody was here. **Add** Texas's natural inhabitants in the landscape such as animals, reptiles, birds, trees, wild nuts, fruit, blackland prairie soil, sunshine, wind, etc.... Clues are in the second half of the poem. The art on top will be what was here in the West area before "us", before people settled here. (second part of poem)

**At the end of the mural**, students can show pioneers traveling in a wagon, plowing up the soil without tractors, (see inside history), cutting down trees, a cabin with farm animals, families, children, toddlers, friends, and maybe they held hands and gave thanks.

**Have fun!** West folks (especially me, the author!) would love to see how your class illustrated this poem about how West looked "*Before Us*"!--before any people were here! ♥☺👋☆➔

**MORE DETAILS on the next pages.**➔

### ★More suggested artwork:

Wildflowers, butterflies, insects, spider webs, blossoming plants, rocks, creeks, black/dark soils, hills, rainbows, etc...



## ★ Project: Creating a Mural of West "Before Us"

Reading the poem *Before Us* makes us think about how West looked *before* Native Americans or the first settlers discovered the fresh spring waters in our area. Most of us think about animals, such as deer and buffalo grazing on the wild plant life here. We might think about smaller animals such as birds, bobcat, rabbits, or snakes eating bugs, rooting around, or maybe eating each other! Remember, this area was WILD! What was growing naturally from the earth back then (besides bluebonnets!). Don't forget springs and trees, sunshine with clouds and birds in the sky. Find the hints in the poem.

Materials needed: A copy of *Before Us*, partners or group, poster board, scissors, glue or tape, crayons, markers, paint, pencil, eraser, ruler, duct tape, pictures or original artwork, an original idea of how to make a flap to hide the picture under it. The flap should lift up so we can see the picture window under it. Then the flap should drop down over the window when you let it go. Posters have to match up with the one before and after your group's section.

If we picture what was here before and then understand what replaced it, we will have a great understanding of West's history! This group project should be fun and full of original ideas of how West (Bold Springs) looked before the 1800's when no people lived here yet. The windows will show what is now here when the flap is lifted. When the flap is down, it should blend in with the countryside of this area.

★★★Let's start brainstorming!★★★

1. Form a group or work with your classmates at your table.
2. With a copy of the poem *Before Us*, decide or choose (or let your teacher assign your group) one of the three line stanzas of the poem.
3. Your job will be to read it and decide how to draw or find a picture of the persons, places, or things in the stanza. Here's an example:

★ *Before the cotton* -draw or find a picture of cotton growing;  
★ *Before any corn*-----draw or find a picture of an ear of corn, or a grain truck full of corn'  
you could even glue kernels of corn inside the window  
★ *Before T. M. West was even born*---draw or find a picture of West's founder  
Draw T.M. West as a baby! (with a beard!) ☺

4. Decide who will find or draw the pictures needed. (*Homework?*) Decide what size the window will be for the pictures so the size will fit. Ask your teacher for help cutting out the window. Remember to make the cover flap bigger than the window.
5. The three lines of the poem are to be written at the top of each poster. You can draw fancy letters, decorate with bees, flowers, etc...Your teacher might let you print the 3 lines.
6. When all of the poster boards are done, they should fit together in the same order of *Before Us* when taped together in the hall or wherever your teacher decides to display this project. The posters must fit side by side so when the whole poem is illustrated, we will → see one continuous countryside of West with its hills, grasses, springs, animals, stars, sunshine, etc....The posters should fit together like puzzle pieces to make one big mural. That

means your group will plan how to connect with the poster/stanza before and after your stanza/poster of the poem. Duct taping them together on the back side might be the best way. When mounting the mural in the hallway, remember to place it where little kids can reach the flaps to lift and see what surprise is underneath.

7. *Now share your project! Share your knowledge of West history!* When all posters are up, of course everyone will want to lift the flaps to see each part of West history that was added to this beautiful land where we live! Invite all the other classes at West Elementary to take a walk through the history of West. When the younger kids come to see it, 4th graders can read the poem to them and then let them lift the flaps to see what is here now. This will be a real treat for the whole school. Invite the Superintendent, your principal, and your parents to see this special project about YOUR HOMETOWN of WEST!



**Downtown West ~ Main Street parking: 1938 Plymouth on the corner, two 1935 "Chevys" in front of the Barber Shop, and a 1936 Ford parked in front of Ben Keen's Department Store. *Can you tell what is different about Old Corner Drug Store?* (Urbanovsky 1938)**



## So, Where in West Texas Do You Live?

☺ *Please write only on the pages your teacher gives each group.* ☺

**West, Texas:** Our hometown! We are proud to say we live in **West**. We go to **West** Elementary School, and in a couple of years we'll be attending school on the NEW **West** Middle School campus! We'll be TROJANS in **West** High School!

It sounds easy to say, "We live in West", but it's not always understood by everyone.

\*With a partner or group, talk about **how West earned its name**. Your group will tell the rest of the class **how "West" happened**. (Was this place always called West?)

\***Choose a writer** in your group to **jot down the story- a summary** of how West got its name.

*Be original! Be funny if you like! Tell the story!*

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*Share your story!*

\*What have been some **problems/situations** that might have happened when you have said, "I live in **West**." Does EVERYONE understand "**West**" is the name of your hometown? Choose a writer to jot down some of the questions you might have been asked when you say, "**I'm from West!**" Also, tell **how you explain "West"**, **where** it is, and what **West is known for** as a city in Texas. Share with the class!

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*Share your ideas!*

### **What if?**

Pretend our city's leaders have decided **West** sounds **too plain or confusing**. They announce:

"The students of West Schools will decide on a new name for our community! We will listen to all ideas of the new name. Then the students will vote by secret ballot on the new name they like best!"

Your teacher will help with the election, but first you and your partner or group have to decide on a new name. Think about it! Fill out the questions on the next page to help with your decision! →

**West Texas towns:** Dime Box, Muleshoe, Kermit, Notrees, Valentine, Wink, Tarzan, Big Stinking Creek, Blanket, Cactus, Earth, Eclipse, Loco, Noodle, Okra, Turkey, Pony, Twitty, Sylvester, Tee Pee City, Sweetwater, White Face, Winters, Happy, Gray Mule, Teacup, Gasoline, Early, Best, Veribest, La Tuna, and finally Goodnight!

## ★ Mock Election to Change West's Name ★

😊 Please write only on the pages your teacher gives each group. 😊

**Mock** means we will imitate or “act like” West has a name problem, so we will vote to change it!  
Use these steps to help your group decide on a new name for West.

What do you **like** about **West**? What do **people from other towns like** about **West**? Think about what is **BEST** about **West**. Write down these ideas. Then **create a new name for West!** **Share** this decision with your classmates. Be sure to tell them why your group chose the new name.

👉 Please have all group members sign the back of your page! 👉

**\*What We Like About West:**

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**\*What Other People From Other Places Like About West:**

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**\*What is BEST about WEST:**

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**\*NEW NAME...(drumroll!)**

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**\*Why we chose this new name:**

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**\*Write all the new names on the board. Now the class will have an election and VOTE by secret ballot! Pass out slips of paper and write down the name of your favorite new name.**

**(Shhhhhh...it's a SECRET!)** Your teacher will collect all the ballots/votes, count up the votes for each name, and announce the winner! Write the new name below~

Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm from \_\_\_\_\_, TX!





Welcome to the City of West, Texas!  
**WEST, TEXAS 76691**



Think of all the places in town that use "WEST" in their name. Can you add to the list?

**Remember to use proper capitalization!**

1. West Elementary School
2. West Middle School
3. West Independent School District
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_
18. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_
21. \_\_\_\_\_
22. \_\_\_\_\_
23. \_\_\_\_\_
24. \_\_\_\_\_
25. \_\_\_\_\_
26. \_\_\_\_\_
27. \_\_\_\_\_
28. \_\_\_\_\_
29. \_\_\_\_\_
30. \_\_\_\_\_

**If you know more names, write on the back of this page. You must be a BEST in WEST EXPERT! Yay!**

**Trivia: What is the name of the FIRST BUSINESS/Store in West?**

\_\_\_\_\_

## MORE FUN IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS AFTER READING WEST IS BEST!

★★★ Does your class have Play-Doh? If so, they can **make play-doh kolaches**. Take it outside and they can use the sidewalk to roll their dough. The sun can bake the kolaches! Use tiny rocks as pecans. No playdoh? It's really easy to make. Recipes are on the internet or on most elementary teacher idea sites. You might even challenge them to have a kolache baking contest like the one at Westfest. Ask the lunch ladies to judge! Maybe a parent will volunteer to bring real kolaches to the winning group, or the class.

*If this activity works out well, call or text me & perhaps I can bring the class kolaches if a parent does not offer. I can also check into a class tour of a bakery. 972-935-6234 Margie Davis; retired teacher; [margied333@gmail.com](mailto:margied333@gmail.com)*

★★

**Tech Time?** Your students might enjoy a little fun and safe genealogy search at *Family Education*:

<http://genealogy.familyeducation.com/surname-origin/>

This url will take you to **NameLab**. In the **blue left column** are several fun spots to explore:

- ✓ Name Search - tells what your last name means and where it's from
- ✓ Build a Name - invent a new name for fun
- ✓ Family Name History - tells country of origin; what it means; all positive feedback
- ✓ Top 100 Names for Girls: You know they will love this!
- ✓ Top 100 Names for Boys: Boys will probably skip this one but the girls won't!
- ✓ Rename Yourself: Just for fun    Name Quizzes: Just for fun

On this sight I typed in my maiden Czech name Mashek and it told me the truth~Mashek is really spelled Masek and it's from Czech-Slovakia area. Masek is short for Tomasek, which is a nickname for someone dear.☺

👋👋👋😊😊😊 ⚙️⚙️⚙️ ☆☆☆ \*\*\* **★★★ Field Trip!** \*\*\* 👋👋👋 😊😊😊 ⚙️⚙️⚙️ ☆☆☆ \*\*\*

The History of West Museum is open & free tours await your class on Thursdays and Fridays@10:00--4:00. The ideal experience is to WALK downtown so students will be able to inspect the buildings built by Mr. West. Read the historical marker on the Groppe Building which tells about the bricks being made in West. (Notice they are darker than most other bricks in town.) Do you know why? (Shh... it's a *dirty* little secret!) Students are welcomed to go inside Old Czech Corner to see the original water cistern & study the inside wall to discover how the outside awnings stay attached to the building★. Mrs. Lisa Muska will answer any questions you have about the rooms. Just a block away students can begin their tour of the museum where they can see many scenes and historic moments discussed in the West is Best History. Please ask questions! Your guides will be happy to answer! **Remember: When you are walking on the streets in town, you are really walking on Mr. T. M. West's farm and cattle pasture! You might can even touch the train tracks!**



## Time Travel to the Past! Enter the Portal to Texas History!

Reading all about how your town was born and how it grew up would not be possible without a **SOURCE**, a starting place, of information. Just as some families have "Baby Books" about their children growing up, West has *The West News*, a newspaper in print that gives West citizens and out of town folks too, a record of what is happening, or has happened in our town. The newspaper tells of future events coming to our town too, and for over 20 years, *The West News* has been including a page about the past entitled, *50 Years Ago*. (Using your math skills, can you figure out the month, day, and year 50 years ago?) The *50 Years Ago* page of each week's current *West News* is one section citizens of West look forward to reading each week. *Can you guess why?*

*The West News* started over 100 years ago, but it was called *The West Weekly News* back then. Being able to see and read the newspapers from West's history can help us learn and understand how West citizens make our city, state, and nation a better place to live. Reporting West's history as you pass to higher grade levels will be easy as you learn how to research a topic for facts to use in a research report. After you pick a topic you like, the first step to researching is to find a primary source of information. Primary means first, so a primary source is the first, and sometimes the best place to look for information on your topic. This site, *Portal to Texas History*, has been made for Texans young and old who enjoy reading about their families, friends, and important times--both good and not so well. Either way, remember that *Portal to Texas History* is a primary source of information that you can use now, at WMS, WHS, and college!

Would you like a challenge? Would you like to see if you can enter the *Portal to Texas History* online? Follow the step by step instructions on the next page and you will find yourself traveling back to the early 1900's in West, Texas!

Portal to Texas History, a service of the *University of North Texas*, has partnered with the *West Public Library* in making historical copies of *The West News* available to the public, especially students studying local community history. A big *thank you* to *West Librarian Nancy Hykel* for her dedication in preserving West's history through education! \*\*\*As an added note for the 2015-2016 school year, Nancy Hykel has announced that *UNT* has agreed to move forward with *The West News* project and will now have issues of the newspaper available to read online up to the year 2000. 🌟 This is great news for those of you who enjoy looking back into time, especially with our history of families, friends, teachers, and future researching days ahead at *WMS*, *WHS*, and college! 😊

# Time Travel for the Future! Learn How to Use Primary Sources

Type in: <http://texashistory.unt.edu/>

When you arrive at the Portal to Texas History you will see many places to search for Texas history, and you can find West history in many of these places, too. For now, let's just stick to finding West history in our hometown newspaper, the ~~The West News~~ (1911-2000).

★ The HOME page is where you will enter information in the search box. If you ever get lost, you can always click on HOME at the top of each page you are reading.

- In the Search Box, type "The West News". Click SUBMIT. You will be taken to the newspaper collection of both the West News and the West Weekly News.
- The newspaper issues are not in order by dates. You can browse (look around!) and when you see an interesting issue, you can click on it to open. Click the numbers at the page bottom to see the next page.
- If you know a date you are interested in, type it in the search box, like this: The West News December 1959. A page with a list of West News printed in December 1959 will appear. Click on the one you think will be interesting.
- **HOW TO LOOK INSIDE THE PAGES:** (For just a quick look, click on the SEQUENCE button.) Once you find an issue you want to explore, you can make it easier to find a specific topic by typing it in the NEW search box in the right margin that says SEARCH INSIDE. Say you want to find information about your great-grandparents and their last name is (for example) SULAK. You would type that name in the SEARCH INSIDE box and click SUBMIT or ENTER. If the newspaper has information on Sulak, a new list will tell the page you will find this info. Click on that page. Sulak will be highlighted.
- **To turn to different pages,** click on the SEQUENCE BOX above your list. It will show you that most West News issues have from 1—8 pages. If you placed a topic in the SEARCH INSIDE box, the topic will be highlighted in yellow on pages with that topic
- **ZOOM in to read!** Look in the right margin and click ZOOM. A zoom in or out button will appear on the left side of the page. To zoom in, click the +; to zoom out click the -.
- **Try different topics** like: West Trojans, basketball, cheerleaders, Chevrolet, Ford truck, Czechs, swimming pool, baseball teams, West High School, West Elementary, St. Mary's School, rodeo parade, or type in family/friends 'names! Remember some names have different spellings.(Neal-Neill-Neil) or (Cook-Koch)
- **LOOK AT STUFF!** Zoom in and look at photos to see different styles of hair and clothing. Check out the advertising, especially for groceries, cars and trucks, animals, or land for sale. Compare those prices to what we pay today. Some old issues have comics and jokes. Look at the ads for movies showing at the three theaters: the Best, the Palace, and the West Drive In movie!
- **ENJOY** reading what you find! Share with your class when it is time to talk about your trip to the past!

★ **READY FOR EXPLORING MORE TEXAS HISTORY?** Click on the EXPLORE button on top of the Home page. You can explore Texas historical **LOCATIONS:** (Goliad, Brazos River, Alamo, San Jacinto Battlefield, Gulf of Mexico, McLennan County), **SUBJECTS:** from A-Z (Sam Houston, Santa Anna, Davy Crockett, Emily Dickenson, Bowie knife, Gonzales, Come and Take It!); **DATES:** (1836, 1850, 1892 West, Texas); **TITLES:** (A Pictorial History of Texas, Yearbooks, Texas History Books, The Constitution of the Republic of Texas, Scouting Magazine, Texas Almanac 1857-2014, The Texas Historian (Junior Historians), and more!

**COLLECTIONS:** Look through the lists! Texas Parks & Wildlife Collection, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Dams; Texas Ranger –news of early Texas; Arts and Crafts Collection, Texas Folklife; Texas Folklore; Are We There Yet?-transportation in Central Texas, and more and more and more!

*The Portal to Texas History has over 700,000 primary sources of information and adds more documents and collections daily!*



# Example of info from Portal to TX History

First Section-Pages 1 to 8

## The West Weekly News.

VOLUME 4

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, OCTOBER 27, 1912, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1912.

NUMBER 1

### FOR WEST BOHEMIAN DAY

Big Preparations Being Made to Outdo Former Efforts. Special Train Will Carry the West Crowd to Waco Cotton Palace Thursday, November 7.

A big mass meeting was held at the Waco Cotton Palace Thursday night by the leading Bohemian societies of the West and a new program of the coming year of American culture. The object of the meeting was to discuss and prepare plans for the West-Bohemian Day celebration.

L. Stewart was chairman and W. L. Kline was secretary. A committee was organized to look after the details of the celebration to be held in St. Louis, Mo., on Thursday, Nov. 7, and leave at 9:30 for Waco. It took American Cotton Palace.

West Bohemian Day will be held in St. Louis, Mo., on Thursday, Nov. 7, and leave at 9:30 for Waco. It took American Cotton Palace.

### PROMINENT BOHEMIANS OF WEST



TOM MOTIS



JOE JANAK



J. R. SCHILLER



C. P. ZAPALAC



ROBERT CURVENKA



REV. JOE HEGAR



J. R. POLASEK



FRANK COCEX



DR. J. S. ZVIESKA



ADOLPH KUDELKA



JOHN ZAPALAC



J. J. SULAK



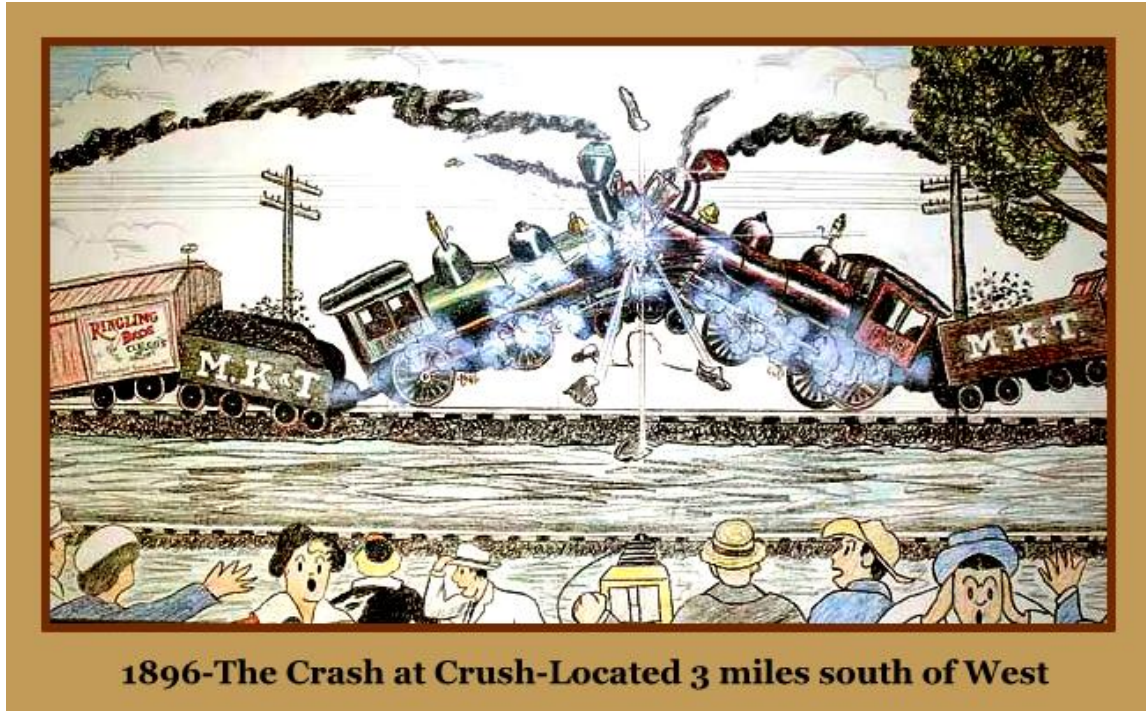
E. W. DLAT



JOHN BEDNAR

November 1912

## The Crash at Crush~ Visual Links



The **Crash at Crush 1896** was a staged publicity stunt sponsored by MKT Railroad after one of their employees had a nifty idea of "killing two birds with one stone": Two boiler engines needed to be replaced with modern ones, plus MKT needed more business. Mr. Crush (his real name) thought up the event, sold tickets, and the City of West was swarming with thousands of tourists wanting to see the smash up. These **You Tube sites** have a full explanation of the event plus some actual footage of the smashup. **Please preview** these short videos before showing the class. Sensitive students may not enjoy seeing a train wreck. (*3 people were killed although not the intention of MKT- Videos do **not** show injuries*)

- Go to: **www.youtube.com** In the search box at top, type in the italicized titles.
- *The Train Crash at Crush - The UnMuseum* Time: 3 minutes
- *Waco, A Moment in Time - Crash at Crush - WCCC-TV* Time: 2:31 minutes
- *The Crash at Crush 115 Year Anniversary & Re-dedication Ceremony - Skip Wilson films Judge David Pareya* retelling the story on the steps of West's MKT Station. Time: 9:42 minutes. New Historical Marker can be viewed today at Katy Depot.
- *The Crush Collision March 1896-Scott Joplin -Temple, Texas-Ragtime* Dorian Henry Alword Time: 4:21 Unique video showing Joplin's sheet music and fingering charts as the march is played.
- *Great Crush Collision March by Scott Joplin - T. Kareem Powell -Pianist plays Joplin's march.* Info of the story can be read. Time: 4:21



## Mluvite Cesky? (mloo vee tay Chess-key) Do you speak Czech?

*Never pass up a moment to learn a new language! Practice these phrases with a Czech citizen of West! Most of the volunteers at the History of West Museum can speak Czech. You may be able to take a Czech Speaking Class when you go to West High!*



✳ **DO YOU SPEAK English? = MLUVITE ANGLICKY?**  
(mloo vee tay ang lick ee)



### *A Very Special Photo*

**Hats off to the West Fire Department** for this great photo of a great moment. 2003 was the year West's current fire station was built. Awards of appreciation were presented to Jake Tucker (standing between the awards), Freddy Gerik (standing 5<sup>th</sup> from right), George Nors (holding award on left) and James Miller (holding award on right) for their work in the design and construction of the new building. ★

# Through the Eyes of a Child ~ How West Became the Best!

If you *really want to know* how our town changed from Bold Springs--a tiny settlement on the wild frontier—to a real town called West, you have to hear it from somebody who was **HERE!** That was the assignment of Louis Garrison, a writer for the *West News*, in 1937. He chose a West resident who had been here from the small beginnings of our community. Joseph Masek/Mashek was an “old timer” who enjoyed telling about West’s “good ol’ days” when he was a small boy growing up in a place many believed to be a paradise. He grew up being the only brother to five sisters, and as an adult he became a husband and the father of 10 children. Many of his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc...still live in the West area today. Who knows? You might even be “kin” to the family of “Uncle Joe”, a nickname he wore proudly because he treated everyone like one of his own family.

The spelling of Mashek is originally Masek with a little check mark over the S. The mark is called a *hacek* (ha-check) which gives the SH sound to the plain S.

*As told to Louis Garrison (Editor's note: This story was reprinted from the Dec 24, 1937 issue of the West News. The paragraphing and font was updated July 27, 2012, by Margie Mashek Davis, youngest granddaughter of Joseph & Katherine Bednar Mashek.).*

## ~ Why My Family Came to Bold Springs and How We Got Here ~

“In **1873** my father (Vaclav Masek) came up from Brenham, Texas, where we then lived, to the present site of our City of West. He was on an **exploring** trip, with the idea of picking



out some State land to settle on. He made the trip from Brenham here **on horseback**. At that time and on up till we moved here the following year, there was **only one store here**, which was owned by T. M. West, the father of our Jeff West. My **father liked the looks of this part of the country** and picked out **one hundred and sixty acres** lying about one and one half miles east of Mr. West's store. He established his claim to this land

while he was here by buying some logs and unloading them on the land, and notifying the State he intended to settle on it. The following year of **1874** he, with his family of four children and wife, moved up here. **I was five years old** at the time and remember the trip very vividly. I had three sisters, two older and one younger than me, at that time. **The trip was made in an ox wagon** in true frontier style. Besides the two oxen, we had **several head of cattle** which were herded on the trip by **two ponies** we brought along. The biggest part of our journey was made **across the rolling prairie** as there were very few roads and practically **no fences** at all. We forded the **Brazos River at Waco**, which at that time was a thriving **little village** sitting on the banks of the river.

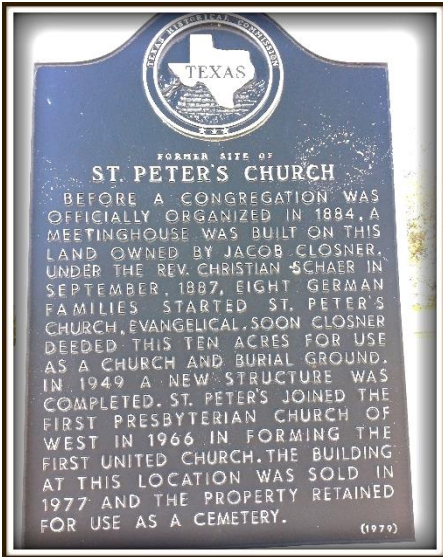


There was no such thing as the square in Waco then. The many business houses were up and down the river on what is now First Street. **It took us nine days to make the move.”**



## ~ Mr. West's Store at Bold Springs ~

“Upon arriving here my father made arrangements with Mr. West for us to stay in a little **log house** that he owned, located about where Mrs. Deveny now lives. We stayed there some **three months while our house out on the place father had picked was being built**. As I remarked before, Mr. T. M. West owned the only store here at that time, and he only carried the bare necessities of foodstuffs. He had in his store a little **flour, sugar, coffee and a few cans of salmons and sardines**. Such things as canned vegetables were unheard of. Along with the groceries, he also had a **few bolts of dry goods and overalls**. I might not have told you, but **this place in those days was known as Bold Springs and not West Station** as everyone out-of-town insists on calling it now. **Mr. West handled the mail** then, what little there was and it was **carried from Waco to Dallas on horseback**, and came through here twice a week.”



## ~Very Few People; Not Much to Do Except Hunt~

“The only families that I can recall living here then were **Tom Bennett**, who lived where the family home now is, the **Closners**, who lived on the home place south of town, **Zack Davis**, a **Mr. Marable**, and of course Mr. West. Now these people lived near here. There were other families living on **Aquilla Creek** and around **Ross**, an even **larger** settlement than here and **Elm Mott**, south of us, had a store and settlement. That place was known as Elm Mott but later it changed to **Geneva**, then it was changed back to Elm Mott.

As you no doubt have judged, **times were very hard in those days**, but one had **no use for much money as there was nothing it would buy**. There were **no churches** to keep up, **no picture shows, no dances** and certainly **no automobiles** to buy gas for. There was **plenty of game to be killed** on the prairie: **deer, antelope, turkey** and plenty of **beef cattle without brands that could be killed at will**. So **sugar, coffee** and sometimes a little **flour was all we bought**. Sweet coffee and flour biscuits were a Sunday affair when we did get them. I remember well of my sister and myself asking my mother when we could have them and she told us we could have them on the seventh day, so thereafter we would mark up on the walls of the cabin each day as it would pass so we could tell when the seventh one came. Our principal **meals were sorghum syrup, cornbread and a meat**. The beef we killed was preserved by drying it. Then in the winter we had pork. Also there was a **prairie chicken** that was very good eating. **The first Christmas we spent here I don't remember getting even a piece of candy.**”

## ~ Time to Work Our Land ~ Thieves Steal Our Oxen ~

“Early in 1875 we moved into our **new home east** of here. This home was a **one room cabin with a lean-to shed** built onto it. But at that time we felt very fortunate in having that. Father had **run out of money** and decided to move back to Brenham. He wrote a friend of his that lived there, to borrow money to come back on, and the fellow **sent him the money**, but told him to **stick it out here**, which he decided at last to do. Upon moving out to our land we

started breaking it up with the two oxen and a plow made entirely of wood except the point. This plow, along with the old style 'eye hold' hoes, was all the farming implements we had. We got along very well until some cow thieves came through and stole our oxen one night. That set us back some. We were the only family of Czechs in the community and were until some years later."

### **Riding My Horse ~ No Fences ~ No Roads ~ Waist High Prairie Grass**

"Anyone at that time could get on a horse at, say Hubbard City, and ride all the way to Aquilla Creek without opening a gate or going over a fence. In fact, the only fences in the county were around the houses or barns. There were several ranches in and around the community, and every fall they would get out and round up all the cattle they could. The only trees to be seen at all were up and down Aquilla Creek, or some other good sized branch or river. The only thing on this land was prairie grass which grew waist high lots of years. When we started to the store here, we just came the nearest way, as there were no roads to bother with. If someone had told me then that I would live to see the time when I could get on cement as smooth as floor and ride to Waco in twenty minutes - well you know what I would have called him!"

### **Our First Cotton Crop ~ We Find a German Church and More Czechs!**



"The first year on the farm I think we made seven or eight bales of cotton. This was ginned at a cotton gin that was run by a Mr. Kelles at what is now known as Lake Park. The gin was ginned by horse power and was fed by horse power and was fed by hand. Six or seven bales a day was the full capacity of his gin. At Martinsville (Tours, as you know it) was a church and it was an event to get to go to church on Sunday. Along in a few years there moved into this place a number of other Czech families, and you may be assured we gave them a hearty welcome, as we had had no one to talk our mother tongue to. After that we had a number of community gatherings that were certainly a treat to us."



## ~ Time for 4 Month School! ~ Making Good Friends ~

“Sometimes along about the time we moved in here there was built a **one room school** building which sat close to the Popp place on the **Tours Road**, known as **Poverty Ridge School**. When I reached the school age I was sent there to school. To start with they had only **one teacher**, but later another was added, but still only one room. Now if you think there was no hubbub when both teachers were hearing a class at the same time you are mistaken. I remember a few of the students that went at the same time I did that are still living around here. Aunt **Meade Aderhold** was **Miss Closner** then at this school. **Will Davis** and **Ernest Grimm** were **also star pupils** of this school as well as **Vince Urbanovsky**. I remember well it was the job of Miss Closner to carry the dinner bucket for her bunch, which included the teacher Mr. Long, as he stayed at their house. I can see them now as they spread their lunch together at noon time. And I think, always will, that due to the fact that the teacher stayed at their house, **Meade was the ‘teachers pet.’** **Ernest Grimm** was a **little late in starting** to school, which made him **about twelve years of age his first day** in school. His father talked to the teacher about him the day before he started, so bright and early on school day he was on hand. But on **calling the roll**, after the rest of the children got there, **Ernest was nowhere to be found**. The teacher began to search for him and at last **found him under the school** house. Ernest was just **too timid to take it** then. However, **later he got acquainted** with the rest of the kids and **could whip most anyone that wanted to tackle him**. His hair was extremely long and a great sport it was to **catch him** by it and **throw him to the ground**. **But he was up and at you again**. **This was only a four-month school.**”

## ~ Wearing Home-Made Clothes ~ Walking Five Miles to Court a Girlfriend ~

“These were **glorious days** in spite of the hardships we encountered in our daily life. Our **clothes**, of course, were **made by our mother**. Mine consisted of **"jeans"** pants and a **shirt** made of **heavy cloth with flowers** of different designs worked in the front. The **back would wear out** about every six or eight months and **mother would just put a new back to the front**. After a while I had a "front" that had worn out five or six "backs."

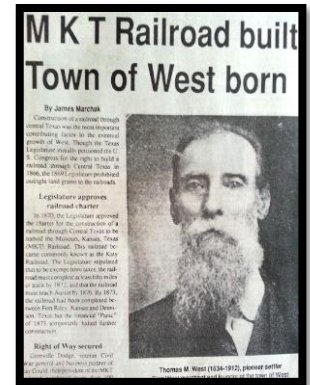
**Courting the girls** was a national pastime then, as it is now, but was **carried out a little different than it is now**. We had to go in and **talk to the "old folks"** as long as we did go with the girl. We had **not even a horse and buggy to ride** them in, and



**possibly had to walk four or five miles to see them**, it all depended on how much you liked the girl as to how far you walked. **Now days** a boy gets in a big ‘purring’ automobile and rides maybe two blocks, arrives up in front of his girl's house, honks his horn and out comes the girl all dressed up, hops in the car, and they drive a hundred miles just ‘cattin’ around.’ The boy spends more money in one afternoon than one family would in those days for six months for groceries!

## ~ The Railroad Arrives ~ Now We Are West ~ Healthy Spring Water ~

“Times have changed slightly. In 1879 the dump for our present railroad was thrown up and remained that way until about 1881, when the railroad was completed. Mr. West moved his store across the tracks to the present site of the old West State Bank building. West, as the town was then called, started to build up, and did a fair job of it. There were several families moved in here from Europe, and the Czech population was increasing by leaps and bounds, as well as the American population. We figured that West Station was going to be the Metropolis of the south then. Dick Mitchell put in a blacksmith shop; Dr. Vaughn came down from Hillsboro and put in a drugstore. Heretofore our medicine



consisted altogether of a **Chill tonic for all ailments**. Now we could get **castor oil and salts**, as well as **horse liniment**. **Chills and fever** were about the **only sickness** we were **bothered with** at that time, due no doubt to the **water** we had to drink. For a long time there was **no water to be had except at a spring where Lake Park now is**. Later we had water where the

Milberger place is located, and **my father and two other men dug out the spring known as Bennett's Spring**. Then too, there was a **spring at the Callen's Grove**.”

*(Note: The spring at Callen's Grove is now the site of the West Pool.)*

## ~Mr. West Starts Building with Bricks ~ Helps Joe with Wedding Bells~

“In 1881 Mr. West built the first brick building which is the West Hotel, now run by R. L. Bailey. The brick was made and hauled from Waco, as was all the lumber for frame buildings. The railroad built a very nice depot here, which was later destroyed by fire. This depot was replaced by the present one.

The first school building was originally built out where W. R. Hurlock's pasture is now and later moved into town on the present site of Mrs. Ethel Boone's house. This was a two room school, afterwards another room being added. Prof. Kelly and his sister-in-law were the teachers. Some churches were built, the Baptist Church being the first one, I believe.

I married in 1891 and moved over near Aquilla Creek. My father gave me a pony and one bale of cotton. The cotton I got eight cents a pound for. After I paid ten dollars for my first suit of clothes, paid the preacher, and for the license, I had no money left. However, Mr. West did a large credit business and he sold me all I needed on fall terms. He sold lots of stuff on the credit then, and I don't believe he lost any money at all on the people he trusted.”





## ~Times Were A-Changing and Continued to Change~

“The **Ingrahams** lived and had a **cattle ranch** out near what is now Tokio. On Snake Creek lived the **Wills family**, one of **two of the boys making doctors**, hence our present **Dr. J. W. Wills**. All of our time was spent outdoors, during the week **herding cattle, plowing, planting**. On **Sunday mornings** we were in **church**; on **Sunday evenings** we were **pony-racing**.

There has been so much of a **change** from the old days it is very **hard** for an **old timer** to realize to just what **extent the change is**. For instance, should someone have told us that we would see the time **when men would fly through the air like birds and under the water like fish**, we would have told them they were **crazy**. That would have **sounded utterly impossible** to us then.



**Another change** from the time we moved here from Brenham to the present - **it took us nine days** to make this move of about **one hundred and fifty miles**. Nine laborious days filled with the unchanging views of the rolling prairie, fording the creeks. **Rolling roughly along in the creaking ox wagon**. The nights filled with the **lonesome howl of the coyote** - now I can get in my car and make this **same trip in three hours**, over smooth roads, across the rivers and creeks on beautiful white cement bridges, and strangest of all, instead of listening to the howl of the coyote, **I can drive along at sixty or seventy miles an hour and listen to the howl of some "crooner"** that is doing his crooning before a **little disc in New York City** and I am hearing it and getting it here at the same time. Is that a change I'm asking you?

In those days it would **take a letter about one week** to go from Brenham, Texas., and the same time to get an answer. Two weeks or about fourteen days to get the thoughts of a man living only one hundred and fifty miles from you. **Now I can step to a telephone and talk to a man direct**, who lives, we will say in Europe, and get connections, we are told, within the period of a few minutes. Our best time coming up here was some **fourteen miles in one day**. Now the fast **airplanes travel that many miles in four minutes**. I believe the **people of my age have lived through the most changing age of all history**. The **children of the present age cannot appreciate the new inventions and methods of today**. They take it all for granted, that is, they are adjusted to these things that are, you might say, new to us "old timers." Yet, I suppose some of us have adjusted ourselves to the new-fangled ideas. For instance, I don't feel like I could do without my automobile. I go in at night, turn on my radio and listen to music played in Chicago, and if I don't like what they are playing there I turn a knob and listen to some in Europe. Now if you think that isn't some **different from the way things were back there in days when our little city was being created, just ask some of the men and women that lived here when West was composed of Mr. West's store. Ask Jeff West, Aunt Meade Aderhold, Vince Urbanovsky, Will Davis, Ernest Grimm, Dr. Wills."** Narrated by ~ **Joseph Mashek "Uncle Joe" 1937**

❖ See next page for West News reporter Louis Garrison's comments. ❖

***Louis Garrison writes:*** “It has been indeed a pleasure and a special privilege to write down in the writer's poor way the happenings of early days in and around West that Uncle Joe has told us. If the readers get as much pleasure out of reading this as the writer has had in putting it down, we will be amply paid. Lots of the **old timers** that settled this country we still have with us, who are now in the evening of life. **Several of them we have lost in the past few years. Those that the curtain of life has been drawn on, and we are thinking of Bart Ingraham, John Soukup, Tom Bennett, Frank Grossman, Sr., Uncle Bill Hurlock, John Girard, and a number of others who have departed this life only recently, lived a full life. They saw this country develop from a barren, treeless prairie into a rich farming and agriculture district. They labored hard to make this change, and they lived to see the fruits of their labor materialize into our country and town as it is today. Theirs was a privileged life, theirs was an age of endless changes. Now they have gone to break new ground and perhaps to settle new frontiers. Let us give flowers to the living and thanks to the departed for their staunchness and determination in living under the hardships they encountered in making this country what it is today.”**

*~ Louis Garrison, 1937*



***Joseph “Uncle Joe” Mashek and his wife Katherine Bednar Mashek raised 10 children in West. 1917***

**Front row:** Edward “Bearkat” Mashek, John Mashek, *Father:* Joseph Mashek, Jerry Mashek, *Mother:* Katherine Bednar Mashek, Joseph “Joe” Mashek Jr., Rosa “Rosie” Mashek Grimm.

**Back row:** Christina Mashek Stanislav, Annie Mashek Hutyra, Jim Mashek, Marie Mashek Urbis, Martha Mashek Stanislav

*This is only but one of the founding families whose ancestors worked hard to bring good life to our community. Like Joseph Mashek said, West has gone through tremendous change and continues to deal with struggles and victories both. Let’s hope we never forget that our community is unique with a fighting spirit to remain the best place for families to grow and be happy. West’s history is rich with love and caring for one another!*



★ Please visit the History of West Museum to learn more about West’s founding families. ★



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♥ Thank you for reading my history book written just for YOU! ♥

☺ Dot Tests are available! ☺

Send feedback & positive suggestions to [Margied333@gmail.com](mailto:Margied333@gmail.com)



~ Architectural drawing of the 1923 West High School by Scott Kapczynski ~

**This historical building is being restored to be the West Independent School District Administration Building!**

## THE BEST OF WEST IS A NEVER-ENDING STORY



**Photo-quilt above:** top left; clockwise: Paulette & Buddy Jezek, Jerry & Denise Gerik’s grandkids©, Textile Plant Field Trip, SMS Graduation, Anna Jane Karlik Grimm, James Cauble’s grave marker, Adolph Muska-teenager, future mayor; Nemecek’s Fat Stock Show, 2015 Trojan State Baseball Champs , Boys & Girls Calf Club, My Family 1962 (Mama is snapping the picture); , Dunbar Dragon Band, Helen Knust ~ future Rodeo princess.

**Cover:** What a hard choice to make with 1000+ photos! **top left clockwise:** Playdium’s 1<sup>st</sup> Splash Day 1946, Honors for the construction of the new West Fire Department, WHS Class of 1959 Cheerleaders, WES kids love Tank the Trojan, Welcomed tractor!, Big Red Country, SMS 1964-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Dancers, Eagle Scouts Ceremony, James Shaw ’68 Double State Track Champ, Frank Nemec—West’s oldest citizen and WWII veteran (Marines), 1<sup>st</sup> Sweepstakes Band’70-’71, 2015 Trojan State Baseball Champs.

♥ **West Is Best! Local Community History 1850-2015 for the Children of West, Texas** ♥  
 ★ **NEW HISTORY HAS BEEN ADDED! SEE THE NEW PAGES THAT FOLLOW!** ★



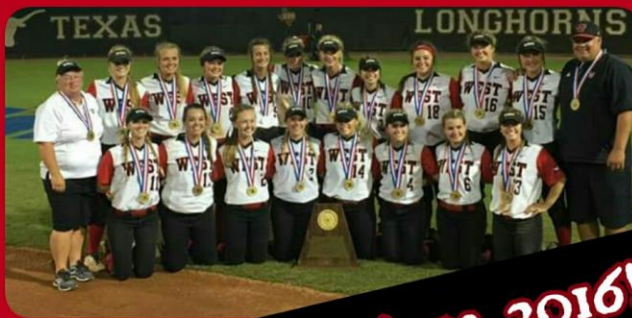
# NEW WEST HISTORY IS MADE IN 2016!

Growing up in West, playing softball together wins the gold!

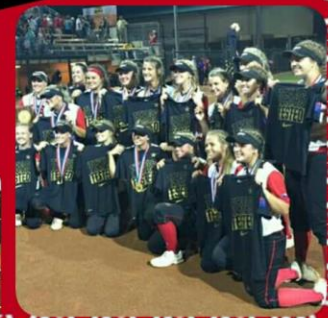
✓ Ladies' FIRST! 👑



**Coach Guyla Smith**  
Winningest Coach in Texas  
High School Softball History  
585 Wins and Counting



**State Champions 2016!**  
**3A Softball**



The **West High School Lady Trojan softball team** made **NEW history** by capturing the very **first state championship** crown on June 2, 2016. Many Lady Trojans have been playing ball together since they were 5 years old! **Coach Guyla Smith's** winning record added another historical moment! **West is Best!**



**"BACK 2 BACK" MEANS MAKING HISTORY TWICE IN A ROW!**  
**HIT DOBRE' ROZTEC = Hit the Good Ones!**

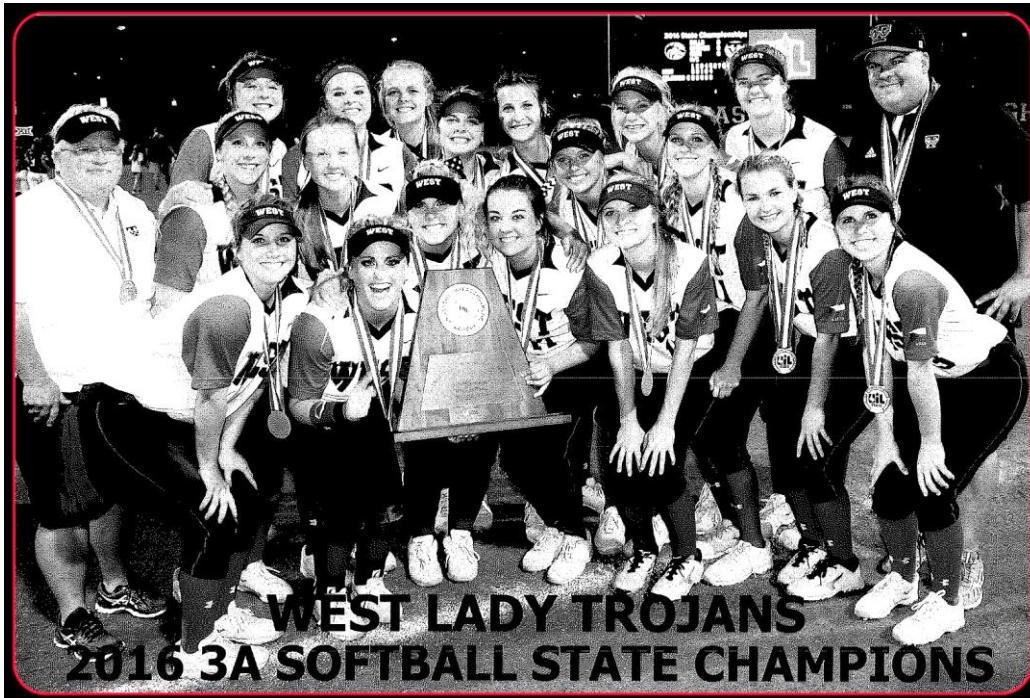


Winning the 2015 State 3A Baseball Championship was a fantastic feat for the West Trojan Baseball team, but winning it again in 2016 felt twice as nice since back-to-back state championships are rare as well as historical! The first state baseball championship was captured in 1999, but never has there been an actual two in a row state victory in the history of West!

**WEST IS BEST AGAIN!**



## West's Best Extreme Teams 2016



**The Champs and their Leaders!** On the front row (left to right): Jordan **Dudik**, Maddison **Kettler**, Carigan **Suggs**, Sierra **Reese**, Julie **Wernet**, Danielle **Nors**, and Anna **Grones**. On the back row: **Head Coach Guyla Smith**, Christian **Holtz**, Kayleigh **Hannah**, Lily **Cook**, Hailey **Fillip**, Cassie **Pavlas**, Raven **Hlavenka**, Marissa **Matus**, Emeri **Eubanks**, Mia **Pokluda**, Kristynnn **Schiller**, Jill **Davis**, and **Assistant Coach Brad Kennedy**.



**Back-2-Back Champs!** Cade **Bing**, Austin **Wood**, Jarek **Rozyskie**, Wyatt **Sparkman**, Dalton **Wiethorn**, Cole **Simmons**, Hunter **Kruppa**, Kory **Webre**, Tyler **Kaluza**, **Head Coach Cory Beckham**. Back: **Dr. George Smith**, **Coach Brian Strickland**, Dalton **Kolar**, Bailey **Horn**, Griffin **Paxton**, Landon **Koch**, Tristan **Gonzales**, Preston **Macik**, Mo **Matus**, Blaine **Browder**, Jacob **Bates**, Gunner **Russell**, Charlie **Tacker**, **Coach Chad McLin**. ★★ *The Double Best of West!* ★★

