

Fall
2014

LEGACIES

A History Journal for Dallas & North Central Texas

New
Directions

Colonel Henry Exall: Building Texas from the Ground Up
Leonora Corona: The Mysterious Life and Brilliant Career of a Texas Diva
Echoes from the Twenties in East Dallas
From Harlem to Soho: Perceptions of Deep Ellum
Housing Families at Mid-Century



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The Dallas Historical Society
The Old Red Museum of Dallas County History and Culture
The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza**

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Front cover

Although Henry Exall's plans to develop a first-class residential suburb along Turtle Creek north of Dallas were stymied by the Financial Panic of 1893, the lake that he created by damming the creek quickly became a popular destination for boating parties and remains a picturesque spot to this day. See "Colonel Henry Exall: Building Texas from the Ground Up," beginning on page 4.

Back cover

**Dallas Municipal Building, c. 1920.
See "Dallas Then and Now," p. 64.**



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All previous issues of *Legacies* from 1989 through 2013 are online at the University of North Texas Portal to Texas History. The address is: <http://texashistory.unt.edu/browse/collections/LHJNT>.



The Gypsy Tea Room was a popular café in the 1930s. See “From Harlem to Soho: Perceptions of Deep Ellum,” beginning on p. 28.

FROM THE EDITOR

*U*nexpected events often force individuals, neighborhoods, or businesses to change course. Flexibility, creativity, and an ability to take advantage of new opportunities are all keys to successful change. The articles in this issue of *Legacies* all explore such situations, suggesting our theme of “New Directions.”

Henry Exall came to Texas as a young man to enter the cattle business. Soon he went into banking. Later he dreamed of a fine residential addition north of Dallas, to be called Philadelphia Place. He created a lake, which still bears his name, but a national “panic” stopped development. Exall then opened a farm on part of the property where he bred trotting horses. Exall’s great-grandson, David Stewart, recounts these and more new directions taken by Exall during his varied career.

As a young woman growing up in Dallas, Lenore Cohren trained as a concert pianist. But an audition with the conductor of the Metropolitan Opera orchestra led to voice lessons in New York and Italy and a successful career (under a new name, Leonora Corona) as a soprano with the Met and other opera companies. When she finally retired at nearly 60, Corona and her husband took another turn, changing their name and moving to Florida. Elizabeth Enstam tells the fascinating story of a woman who continued to create new identities for herself throughout her life.

Historic commercial buildings nearly always must adapt to new uses if they are to survive. Mark Rice describes two built in East Dallas in the 1920s, one of which began as a cleaning business and later housed a dance hall, a furniture and appliance

store, and restaurants, among other enterprises. The other began life as a bakery and eventually housed a book cover business and a fabric store. Both are substantial buildings, yet they also tend to blend into their neighborhood, not calling attention to themselves. At nearly 90 years old, both continue to serve the community.

Deep Ellum has always been one of the most distinct and alluring neighborhoods in Dallas. As Erica Johnson explains, it has gone through many phases over the past 150 years, experiencing periods of prosperity, notoriety, physical changes, and economic slowdown. And its image has also continued to change, as it reinvented itself. From a Texas version of New York City’s Harlem, it has gradually transformed into something more akin to another NYC neighborhood, SoHo.

Residential neighborhoods also underwent a subtle but substantial change in the 1950s and ‘60s as home builders introduced new concepts designed to appeal to changing tastes and take advantage of new technology. Ranch style homes with open floor plans, multi-purpose rooms, and amenities like automatic dishwashers and central air conditioning began to proliferate across former farm land and pastures. Kerry Adams focuses on several leading developers and offers a personal perspective on living in one of these houses a half century after its construction.

Changing course, heading off in a new direction, can be daunting. The outcome is unpredictable. But new directions, when pursued imaginatively, can lead to unexpected rewards, both for individuals and their community.

—*Michael V. Hazel*



Colonel Henry Exall

Building Texas from the Ground Up

BY DAVID EXALL STEWART

One hundred years ago, Fair Park Coliseum was packed with thousands—from tenant farmers to leading businessmen—who came to pay tribute to the life of one of Texas' foremost citizens. "It is a long time," *The Galveston News* opined in 1914, "since the death of any man in Texas has evoked so many eulogies as did that of Col. Henry Exall."¹

Those who know the name these days mostly associate Exall with assembling the land that would become Highland Park. But at the time of his passing, Exall was beloved for helping thousands of Texas farmers to adopt scientific farming methods, improve their soil, and boost their yields (as well as profits).

The Civil War veteran, cattleman, banker, developer, horse-breeder, and civic leader under-

took this effort at age 61 because he felt close to the causes involved. Increasing the efficiencies of farmers would help feed the "great tide of people" streaming into the cities. And those efficiencies would put more money into the pockets of farmers, and so into the state's economy.

But Exall had personal reasons, too.

An opportunity in the cattle business brought Henry Exall to Texas from his native Virginia (by way of Kentucky) in 1876. At age 28, he settled in Tarrant County, where he had the opportunity to participate in driving cattle north to market, across the Great Plains before the advent of barbed wire.

The cattle business and his financial acumen soon landed him in Lampasas Springs, which experienced a short-lived railroad boom starting in 1881.



Exall constructed the North Texas National Bank Building in 1888 and maintained his office there (see the close-up of his window). It was located on Main between Lamar and Poydras.

Here, at age 37, Exall was serving as the vice president of the Lampasas National Bank when he had the chance to open and call to order the first meeting of the Texas Bankers Association.

“Your prosperity,” he declared to the 35 bankers gathered at the Park Hotel in Lampasas in July 1885, “is intimately and indissolubly connected with every legitimate enterprise.² “You must guide the strong;” Exall counseled, “protect and foster the weak; stimulate honest endeavor, and curb the speculative tendencies of the rash. You must oil the wheels of trade; but keep the brake well in hand, that action and Industry may have full vent, but disasters be averted, that public and private confidence may, as it were, be grounded upon a rock.”

The words elevated the bankers’ cause and the prospects for money and banks in Texas. And they uncorked Exall’s career. From this point forward, he found himself in great demand to articulate and elevate other causes. But he would choose carefully.

That same year, 1885, the former messenger and foot soldier in Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia was honored by the governor with the



Henry Exall around 1887, when he married May Dickson, who was to leave her own mark on Dallas by helping to establish critical cultural organizations.

title of colonel and quartermaster general of the Texas Volunteer Troops. By this time, he also was serving as chairman of the state’s Democratic executive committee, helping to steady the party as it worked through a division over its position on Prohibition. In 1887, the 39-year-old Exall represented Texas at the annual meeting of the American Bankers Association. There, he gained valuable contacts as he prepared to open a bank in his new home of Dallas.

In November of that year, Exall married a 28-year-old, Vassar-educated native of Collin County named May Dickson. They honeymooned in California, which they toured for three weeks.³ (Mrs. Exall would go on to found the Dallas Shakespeare Club and the Dallas Woman’s Club and is also credited with founding the Dallas Public Library and the Dallas Museum of Art.)



This plat map for Exall's proposed Philadelphia Place shows the lake he created by damming Turtle Creek. But the financial Panic of 1893 stopped further development, and it was left to John S. Armstrong and his sons-in-law Edgar Flippen and Hugh Prather to develop the land a dozen years later under the new name of Highland Park.

Upon his return, serious work began on an eight-story “skyscraper” that would stand as the city’s tallest nineteenth-century structure (by a story or two) and house his North Texas National Bank. Designed by the J. B. Legg Architectural Company of St. Louis, the massive structure has been described as embodying “those qualities of raw power, determination, [and] strength” that characterized Dallas.⁴ The state-of-the-art building would help Exall demonstrate Dallas’s progressive spirit as he set out to the established cities of the North and East to attract capital to the state and city.

With the Gilded Age barreling ahead at full speed, he succeeded, making impressive inroads in elite circles. He brought Adolphus Busch (with whom he would remain a lifelong friend) into a number of ventures beginning in 1890⁵ and sold his Exall Building in Dallas to a Boston investment group (led by the former governor of Massachusetts) in 1891.⁶

“Some of the speeches which he made in the East,” wrote Richard H. Edmonds, editor of Baltimore’s *Manufacturers’ Record*, at Exall’s death, “deserve to rank as among the most brilliant presentations of the South ever made.”⁷ “These addresses made a very deep impression upon bankers and others in the East,” Edmonds added, “and largely influenced the trend of capital to that section of Texas.”

But his partnership with the interests of Anthony Drexel and J.P. Morgan in 1889 would be pivotal.

Exall had fallen in love with an area just north of Dallas centered on Turtle Creek. By 1889, he had already organized a few friendly local investors to secure about a third of the 1,326-acre tract. Then on July 25, 1889, he formed a partnership with his Eastern investors to gobble up the entire piece with the intent of developing a high-end residential suburb called Philadelphia Place.⁸ He built a dam on Turtle Creek to create what would come to be known as Exall Lake. In addition to the lake, Exall and friend Col. J.T. Trezevant carved a scenic parkway along Turtle Creek to connect Dallas to the project. Inspired by Fairmont Park in

Philadelphia (the hometown of Exall’s mother), Turtle Creek Parkway remains one of the most elegant roadways in the Southwest.⁹

It was fortunate that for this—a landmark purchase in Texas in 1889—Exall had attracted patient investors. Just four years later, in 1893, things changed for everyone. While throngs traveled to Chicago for the World’s Fair to marvel at the exposition of exciting new technologies, the Panic of 1893—a mammoth worldwide financial collapse—torpedoed the Gilded Age and sank the world’s major economies into a morass.

For Exall, who had been appointed by President Benjamin Harrison as a commissioner-at-large for the World’s Fair in Chicago, the twelve months married the highs and lows of his life. Like so many other capitalists at the time, Exall and his North Texas National Bank were caught over extended. As the bank’s leading executive, he assumed responsibility for all of the depositors’ money.

The bust abruptly ended his days as a millionaire, but it did not end his days in Dallas. Exall persuaded his partners in the Philadelphia Place partnership to take the long view and hold the acreage together rather than sell it off piecemeal. Eventually he paid off the bank’s depositors, and in the fall of 1906, consummated a sale of the Philadelphia Place property.

The safe haven provided by Exall and his partners kept the prospects for a luxury suburb alive and made it possible for John S. Armstrong and his sons-in-law, Edgar R. Flippen and Hugh Prather, to develop the land into Highland Park.

In the years between 1893 and 1906, Exall poured all of his energies into his Lomo Alto Farm (adjacent to the Philadelphia Place acreage), where he worked to recover his losses and those of his depositors. He would build on his local reputation for trotting horses which won many a race at the Texas State Fair (over which he had presided as president in 1889). He experimented with the latest techniques and equipment, taking clues from Leland Stanford, the California governor and industrialist who completed the transcontinental railroad. Stanford had a passion



One of the greatest trotting horses of his era, Electrite, which Exall purchased in 1892, brought renown to Exall's Lomo Alto Farm.

for finding new ways to train horses at his Palo Alto Farm. (It was Stanford who commissioned Eadweard Muybridge to capture the first stop-action photos of a horse's gallop).

Like Stanford, Exall applied scientific study to the art of raising standard-bred trotting horses, paying especially close attention to the care and feeding of the animals. And the Virginian, who had spent the early years of his adulthood in Kentucky, believed North Texas provided an ideal environment for the animals.

In 1892 (before the Panic), Exall made perhaps his most important investment when he purchased a horse named Electrite (born in 1888), a son of Stanford's legendary sire Electioneer, who is still considered the greatest horse of his era.¹⁰ Electrite lived up to his father's reputation and through his progeny (and his progeny's progeny), he played a major role in helping Lomo Alto ascend to the highest ranks of the nation's horse farms between 1892 and 1910. Lomo Alto's trotting horses grew in demand not just in New York and Chicago, but in England, Austria, and Russia.¹¹

The farm became a show place, not unlike the Palo Alto Farm in California, which after the

turn of the century was sporting the first few buildings of Stanford University. (The signature red barn still stands on "the farm," which is the nickname for the Stanford campus.) During a 1909 visit to Dallas, Harvard University president William Eliot spent an entire morning with Exall touring the Lomo Alto Farm's new location on Preston Road north of Lovers Lane.¹²

A few telltale signs remain today from Exall's deep involvement in this part of Dallas. The lake, originally known as Exall's Lake, has come to be known as simply Exall Lake. And then there are the thoroughfares, which once upon a time were just trails: Lomo Alto Drive appears aligned with the road Exall would have taken to his home in Dallas and his farm. And Lovers Lane and Mockingbird Lane were the names bestowed on these dusty roads by his wife.¹³

While the Lomo Alto Farm was famous for its horses, Exall's fascination with providing his stock the best in nutrition led him to study the science of growing crops with which to feed them. His accumulated wisdom became widely relevant with the growth of the cities and the subsequent strain of food supplies. Food in the Progressive Era, much like capital in the Gilded Age, was inhibiting growth. While state agricultural colleges and governmental agencies sought to improve the efficiency of farms, state leaders saw that those efforts were falling short.

In April 1910, Robert J. Kleburg of the King Ranch presided over a meeting in San Antonio of the newly formed Texas Industrial Congress (a sort of statewide chamber of commerce).¹⁴ They set out to promote growth by starting with agriculture. The delegates recommended Col. Exall as the person best suited to effect changes among the state's farmers. Exall, now age 61, was not in attendance. But he was elected on the assurances of Dallas delegates who believed Exall would not turn down such a worthy cause.

Sure enough, the importance of the challenge intrigued him. The old Virginian quickly laid out an aggressive communications campaign and set out to put it motion. Soon he was addressing audiences of all kinds—from farmers to

bankers—with his clear, almost poetic message. The subject for Exall was not just about farming or food, it was “as sacred as the shimmering torch of life itself.” “In the fight between the acre and the man,” he said, “the man inevitably gets the acre. He takes away more than he can return, then the acre inevitably gets the man.”¹⁵

From New York, Louisville, and Atlanta to Quitman, Haslett, and Laredo, Exall spread the word. His pamphlets filled mailboxes and his message filled newspaper columns. “When the farmer increases his net income without impairing his capital,” Exall explained to city folk, “he creates new wealth, avails bank deposits, puts more money into circulation and increases the demand for everything that is for sale.” “No other one occupation or business is so valuable to every other avocation as is profitable and successful farming.”¹⁶ To the tenant farmers, he preached the tenets of scientific agriculture—selecting the right seeds, rotating crops, and caring for the soil—that could help them make a decent living for

their families, with little extra effort.

But the keystone of Exall’s campaign was a purse of \$10,000 in gold (roughly \$234,000 today) to be awarded for a range of crop-growing contests. The top prize winners earned \$500 to \$1,000. Exall aimed his efforts squarely at young farmers, the ones most likely to leave for cities. And it worked. The number of contestants grew from 1,742 in 1911 to 4,030 in 1912 to 10,865 in 1913.¹⁷

The Texas Industrial Congress contests were capped with large conventions in Dallas, demonstrating and celebrating the huge increases in production that were possible when using scientific methods. At those annual conventions, Exall personally congratulated the winners and counseled them to “go and show your neighbors how you did it and bless your country and your state.” “Never before in a long life,” said J.F.B. Beckwith, a Baylor professor of oratory, after the December 1912 congress, “has [this writer] witnessed the spirit of progress so obsess a body of young and



Exall at his desk. Note the portrait of Electrite in the background.

old, men and women, that they wept—wept tears of hope for our glorious state.”¹⁸

On December 29, 1913, Texans wept for Exall, who passed away at the family home in Dallas after failing to recover from an operation. Many believed he had worked himself to exhaustion. “Colonel Exall was attacking a problem,” noted *The American Lumberman*, “that the Department of Agriculture and all the agricultural colleges of the country had been working at for years,” but had made “little headway against the great national bulk of farmers’ ignorance and conservatism.”¹⁹

“He was able in a few years’ time,” said E. J. Kyle, dean of Texas A&M, at Exall’s memorial service at Fair Park Coliseum on February 22, 1914, “to become one of the greatest, if not the greatest, teacher of practical agriculture this country has ever known.”²⁰ “His pure, simple, and unselfish life enabled him to teach by example as well as by word of mouth.” “It is not too much to say,” Kyle added, “that agricultural conditions have been revolutionized in the State of Texas within the last few years and no other man had more to do with this great movement than Col. Exall.”

Exall’s good friend G. B. Dealey, publisher of *The Dallas Morning News*, shared the personal side of Exall’s story with the thousands gathered at the Coliseum. “Morning and night, in the sunshine and the rain, sometimes physically strong, many times weak, weary, and heavy-laden, he made his way. He worked without pay. Indeed he gave freely from his own purse to the cause.”²¹

“Why did he do it?” Dealey asked. “His quick, kindly eye saw the miserable housing conditions and wretched environment on some of the farms,” the publisher emphasized. “Many times have I seen his eyes moisten as he so graphically told the hard lot of some of the wives and children of farmers and depicted scenes of misery he had witnessed. While he scattered intelligence, while he cried, ‘Waste not, want not,’ his great heart also pleaded for social justice and for a square deal for those not getting it.” “No one better than he,” Dealey suggested, “realized that a State or Nation cannot really prosper unless all of its people have a chance for a decent comfortable

living and opportunity to progress.”

“Henry Exall and adversity met once,” wrote *The Beaumont Enterprise* after his death. “The struggle was not a brief one, but adversity lost and Exall won.”²²

As did Dallas and Texas.

NOTES

¹“The Legacy Left Us by Colonel Exall,” *The Galveston News*, January 11, 1914.

²“The Texas Bankers Association—A History,” *The Texas Bankers Record*, January 1917.

³“Exall-Dickson Nuptials,” *The Dallas Morning News*, November 10, 1887 (hereafter cited as *DMN*).

⁴William L. McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered* (Dallas: The Dallas Historical Society, 1978), 46–49. The building survived until 1967.

⁵“Most Decidedly on Top,” *DMN*, March 7, 1890.

⁶“Large Sale of Real Estate,” *DMN*, August 1, 1891.

⁷“Tribute is Offered to Exall’s Memory,” *DMN*, February 23, 1914.

⁸“Highland Park,” Sam Acheson, *DMN*, August 25, 1966. See also “Highland Park’s Origins and Development,” in Acheson’s *Dallas Yesterday*, ed. by Lee Milazzo (Dallas: SMU Press, 1977), 52–56.

⁹“Dallas in the East,” *DMN*, June 30, 1889.

¹⁰“Round About Town,” *DMN*, February 5, 1892.

¹¹“When Texas-breds Outpaced the Nation,” sallyharrison.com, April 27, 2011.

¹²“Meet the Distinguished Guest,” *DMN*, February 23, 1909.

¹³Ted Dealey, *Diaper Days of Dallas* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 137.

¹⁴“Dallas Secures Industrial Congress,” *DMN*, November 15, 1910.

¹⁵“Henry Exall Makes Kentuckians Think,” *DMN*, January 13, 1913.

¹⁶*For a Greater Texas* (Texas Industrial Congress pamphlet), “The Farmer Who Feeds the World.”

¹⁷Texas Farmers’ Industrial Congress, *Baptist Standard*, February 26, 1914.

¹⁸“Tribute to Col. Henry Exall,” *DMN*, December 15, 1912.

¹⁹“A Soil Conservationist,” *American Lumberman*, April 20, 1912.

²⁰“Tributes to Memory of Col. Henry Exall,” *DMN*, February 22, 1914.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²“Texas Lost a Great Man,” *Beaumont Enterprise*, December 31, 1913.

STEP INTO THE PAST

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DALLAS HERITAGE VILLAGE

Leonora Corona

The Mysterious Life and Brilliant Career of a Texas Diva

BY ELIZABETH YORK ENSTAM

On Thanksgiving Day in 1927, Lenore Cohron achieved the triumph she had worked for, and dreamed of, all her life. Under the stage name Leonora Corona, she made her debut with the Metropolitan Opera in Giuseppe Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. *The New York Times* critic called her "a strikingly beautiful figure on the stage" and praised her "big, somewhat dark, emotional and . . . unmistakably operatic voice." In particular, he noted her "instinct for coloring tone in accordance with the . . . situation [of a particular scene]." Like the other reviewers, he saw signs of nervousness—this was, after all, her debut. But the moments of vocal insecurity were more serious, and her acting was less than sophisticated. Overall, *The Times* concluded, this was a young and gifted singer with "great power to interest an audience." The audience spoke for themselves with "shouts and thunderous applause."¹

Early the next year, in March 1928, Corona sang her first American performance of the title role in Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*. *The New York Times* complained about her traditional interpretation of the character, but admitted she looked

"a beauty in tiara and train." Other critics praised her voice and saw promise of a truly great singer. But the reviewers agreed that her *Tosca* needed some work, and these comments most likely annoyed Corona: *Tosca* was her favorite role. She was undoubtedly gratified, however, by the audience who brought her back for twenty curtain calls.² At later performances, the audience welcomed her with applause merely because she walked onstage. Leonora Corona was a star.

She called herself a Texan. Before 1927 and her Metropolitan debut, Corona had lived in Seattle and possibly San Francisco, studied in New York and Italy, and sung in European and Caribbean cities. After all that, she claimed Dallas as home. Five months after her Metropolitan debut, she visited the city for the first time in more than a decade and found a welcome that amounted to a celebration. After a formal address by Mayor R. E. Burt, she rode in a parade and along the route, "was showered with flowers" by Dallas schoolchildren. As the guest of honor at parties and dinners, this "first Dallas girl to sing with the Metropolitan Opera" was greeted by



Leonora Corona inscribed this photograph to Irene Shaw Jones in 1928, around the time of her Metropolitan Opera debut. She may be costumed as Tosca, one of her most successful roles that year.



Leonora Corona, right, posed with “America’s Most Photographed Model” Janice Jarrett, formerly of San Antonio, in 1936 at a tea given by the Texas Centennial Commission at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. They are photographed with “Bluebonnet,” a landscape by Julian Onderdonk, the inspiration for a new color, Bluebonnet Blue, created in honor of the Centennial celebration.

“hundreds of friends.” The central event of the weekend was her homecoming recital before a very large, very appreciative audience at the Fair Park Auditorium. On Sunday morning, she went to services at the Oak Cliff Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), where years before, she sang in the choir.³

Leonora Corona identified with her origins in ways other opera singers seem not to have done. As “the Texas soprano,” she claimed something of the mystique of the Old West that still lingered about the Lone Star State, and her reasons lay beyond nostalgia or sentimentality. Aside from years of study, perpetual rehearsals, and the rigors

of performance, a successful career required the creation of a public image. Corona crafted hers as well as any film star of the times—and as lacking in complete honesty. Perhaps even when she first went to study in Italy in the early 1920s, she was already less than truthful about three facts: her age, her birthplace, and her father’s career.

When she debuted with the Metropolitan Opera, she shaved a full decade from her age. In 1927, Leonora Corona was 37—not so old as old goes, but also not the 27 years she led people to believe. She was born October 14, 1890.⁴ Amusing though deceptive, the fib was what we now call “a career move,” and it was wise. Age

prejudice and age preference favored the young. Given Lenore Cohron's late start as a singer, her unusually youthful appearance served her well. The ten years that gave her advantages of experience and maturity could well have caused conductors and opera managers, had they known her actual age, to take her less seriously as a promising artist.

She embellished other aspects of her life, too. Dallas was not her place of birth, but where she grew up. Rather, she was born in Franklin, Texas, where her father was district attorney for Robertson County. Cicero F. Cohron was the son of early Texas settlers. In 1895, he and his wife moved their young family from Franklin to Oak Cliff, where he quickly became a respected, successful attorney. He took an active, even leading role in the annexation of Oak Cliff into Dallas, but he was never a federal judge as Lenore claimed. In 1904, he died of a stroke at 46.⁵

During her formative years, from age five until she was nearly twenty, her family encouraged her music studies. As a teenager, she took piano along with her other classes at the Patton Seminary and Conservatory, a private school for girls in Oak Cliff. Her mother taught piano at Texas Baptist University on Lancaster Avenue, and Lenore, also, gave piano lessons to help support the family after her father's death. Most of all, Lenore yearned to sing. She played the piano for dance classes to earn the money for voice lessons with Clarence McGee and sang in her church choir. Beyond her musical activities, she took interest in community life. In 1909, Lenore joined the scores of women who, on one day each year, stood on street corners during the morning and evening rush hours to ask passers-by for donations. This was Tag Day, the Dallas Federation of Women's Clubs annual drive to raise money for charity.⁶

In 1910, the widowed Annie Cohron moved the family to Seattle, perhaps hoping to find better opportunities for her children and for herself. A city of nearly 300,000 was likely to have a larger community of classical music lovers than Dallas's slightly more than 92,000 people. In Seattle and

San Francisco during her early-twenties, Lenore at last began serious work in voice, though she continued to play regular piano recitals, too.⁷

Contradictory remarks in interviews and later press releases have complicated the story of her training and discovery as a singer. There is no doubt, however, that her lifelong adviser and closest friend, her mother, was also her first serious obstacle. Herself an accomplished pianist and music teacher, Annie Chambers Cohron recognized Lenore's musical talent early, but believed her daughter's best chances for success were with the piano. While never discouraging Lenore's interest in voice, Mrs. Cohron gave the idea little support.

The 1910s and early 1920s were crucial years for Lenore's operatic career, and time after time, she had the good fortune to be heard by an influential person who could help her. In San Francisco she sang for Gennaro Papi, conductor of the House Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera. At least two different stories exist about this turning point of her life.⁸ However she managed to achieve the audition, Papi's advice cinched her future: go at once to study in New York. His stature in the operatic world was undeniable, and his enthusiasm for Lenore's voice at last convinced her mother. Annie Cohron and her younger son, Cicero, moved with Lenore to New York.

Two years later, the Cohrons set sail for Italy, where Lenore studied and performed for the next three years. She proved to be a quick study, learning seven operatic roles in seven months. Italian friends found her name difficult to pronounce and dubbed her "Leonora Corona," which she adopted for her operatic debut in Naples. Her performance there in Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele* led to appearances at La Scala. In Milan, she sang under the direction of Arturo Toscanini and Tullio Serafin, the latter then famous for reviving long-unheard operas by major composers. Serafin was also known for coaching young and gifted singers like Corona, though Maria Callas became his most famous discovery.

In 1925 or 1926, Corona joined La Bracale, the company founded around 1900 by an Italian

impresario. After years on the operatic stage, Adolfo Bracale decided to take classical opera to South America, and he engaged major operatic stars, among them the legendary Enrico Caruso. When Leonora Corona sang with the company in Havana, Giulio Gatti-Casazza, manager of the Metropolitan Opera, heard her perform and hired her. At a time when few American singers joined the Metropolitan without first making a name for themselves in Europe, Corona had paid her dues.

Age, birthplace, family background, and musical training—few of the people in her audiences gave much thought to the details of her private life and personal history. Certainly, the audience cared only for her performance when she sang the role of Tosca at the Opera Comique in Paris, France. On that evening in early June 1928 (about a month after her homecoming recital in Dallas), many American tourists were in the audience, as well as American residents of France who were, perhaps, a little homesick. Their applause was even more enthusiastic than that of New Yorkers. In contrast to the New York critics, reviewers of the Paris performance praised her “histrionic powers” along with her voice and vocal technique.⁹

Early in 1929, critical praise was generous when she returned to the Metropolitan stage in Pietro Mascagni’s *Cavalleria Rusticana* and later, when she first sang the title role in Verdi’s *Aida*. The *Times* critic wrote that her voice had “gained in mellowness and freedom of delivery.” He specifically praised her singing of the famous aria, “O Patria Mia” for “suave nobility of line, fine restraint, and even tone.”¹⁰ The April issue of *The Musician* placed her “among the Metropolitan Opera’s most favored artists.”¹¹

She reached the peak of her operatic career during the 1930s. Between 1929 and 1935, Leonora Corona performed more than forty roles. In addition to her schedule with the Metropolitan Opera, she sang with regional companies in large cities like Chicago, Boston, and Syracuse, as well as for music festivals in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Birmingham, Alabama.



By 1937 Leonora Corona was a blonde, a change that made some critics—accustomed to her in dark, sultry roles—uncomfortable. But they continued to praise her singing.

As her professional life developed, so did her carefully crafted public image. A star needs to be seen as having a real life off-stage, and like her identification with Texas, Corona’s story of discovering her talisman is one example of how this may be achieved. Every performance depends on practice and preparation, yet performers seem to live in awe of the random factor called luck, sometimes to the point of superstition. As insurance against chance during a performance, Leonora Corona wore a small, jeweled elephant pinned to her costume—underneath a collar, perhaps, or inside the folds of a skirt. She also owned a collection of more than 200 elephants made of glass, ceramic, metal, stone, or ivory, most of them given to her by friends and admirers.

Her attachment to elephants began in her early twenties, when she sang in a thirty-minute opera she also wrote, “The Egyptian Tragedy.” For luck, she wore a tiny brass elephant pinned to her costume. Years afterwards, she embellished the story of her talisman by setting it in Algiers. When her ship docked in the ancient city on the way to Italy, Lenore and her mother went for a walk. Sitting beneath a tent on one street was an



Leonora Corona made her last appearances in Texas in 1939 when she starred in a production of *Cynthia Parker*, by Julia Smith, at North Texas State Teachers College. In this publicity photo, she is holding the child who portrayed Cynthia Parker's Indian daughter, Prairie Flower.

elderly Arab, who offered to tell their fortunes. Before they left, he advised Lenore to find her talisman, the first animal she saw on the street, he said—an elephant, as it turned out, with three American tourists riding on its back.¹² The story is imaginative and somehow, not quite plausible. The ship may indeed have stopped in Algiers, but the Arab fortuneteller and his tent may be too convenient. Moreover, Arabs are traditionally associated with camels and very fine horses, not elephants—though perhaps Algiers had a zoo.

Most likely, Corona wore an elephant pin when she sang again in Dallas in April 1933. The local publicity seemed more subdued than four years earlier. By this time, she was well-established and however much admired, now lacking in the luster of a new star. Her performance of an all-

Wagner program with the Dallas Symphony was no doubt a heavy-duty classical event that would please serious opera lovers, though hardly electrify other tastes in vocal music. Perhaps the solo recital sponsored by the Dallas Woman's Club included selections from operettas or musical theater, if not popular songs. For a recital in Denison, Dallas Symphony director Paul Van Katwijk accompanied her on the piano.¹³

Soon after her visit to Dallas, Corona sang the role of the sensual temptress of Jules Massenet's *Thaïs*. As the first opera she ever saw, *Thaïs* had emotional resonance. In that role, the famed soprano Mary Garden had strengthened the young Corona's determination to sing. Years later, in summer 1933, *Thaïs* opened to a skimpy audience at the Zoo Opera Theater in Cincinnati,

Ohio. Massenet's story line is simple. A Christian monk leaves his solitude to convert the notorious courtesan Thaïs, who is also the most beautiful woman in Alexandria. Thaïs does not welcome his concern for her soul and taunts the monk. She mocks him, then flings back her cloak to tempt him with her nude body—clothed in Cincinnati by a flesh-colored, two-piece swimsuit.¹⁴

The audience was satisfyingly shocked. After the final curtain, one man clucked about “two bits of gauze here and there,” though the 1939 press photographs now seem quaint and innocent, even funny. A second male opera-goer—actually a critic and therefore a more worldly sort—saw Corona's Thaïs as “practically incandescent.” A woman reviewer observed generously that “Miss Corona is physically attractive,” then flung a mild zinger: “and she managed to acquaint the audience with this fact.” Still, Corona was not the first soprano to sing Thaïs wearing too small a costume. Mary Garden prepared for the role with hours in the sun to get a good tan.

In interviews after the first night, Corona appealed to artistic integrity. “On the stage, I must live the part. If Thaïs had no modesty, I must have none,” she said, adding, “If [people] don't want to see me as Thaïs, tell them to come back later when I play in *The Girl of The Golden West*. There I wear lots of clothes—even boots.” Two nights later, the second performance of *Thaïs* opened to a full house. *The Dallas Morning News* music writer wrote a brief sermon, but excused Corona for “an artistic error and not cheap exhibitionism.” Until *Thaïs*, the Oak Cliff native had always “been an honest and artistic singer . . .”¹⁵

Whatever the variety of her subsequent operatic roles and in spite of numerous recital appearances, Corona's Thaïs lingered in the public—or at least, in the press's—memory. In 1939, she sued an Italian impresario for failure to pay her in 1933 for singing *Aida*. *The New York Daily News* reported the lawsuit with a headline above her photograph, “Opera's Strip-Teaser Wins Suit,” and in a later issue, “Warbled—No \$\$—says Thaïs.” Another paper reported, “Thaïs Wants Pay for Singing *Aida*.” At the height of the Great

Depression in 1932–33, Corona's regular fee was \$750 to \$1,000 per performance. The lawsuit of 1939 brought \$207, but probably far more value in publicity.¹⁶

Ever popular with the opera-going public, Leonora Corona left the Metropolitan in 1935. After that year, she devoted her time to solo recital performances and appearances with regional opera companies. The new schedule took her to more stages and different audiences. Regional critics were more appreciative than those in New York, too. While younger artists may benefit, and even learn from focused, explicit criticism, a more mature singer may, after a time, find such comments merely wearing.

In 1937, the reviews excerpted in one of Corona's publicity sheets were far more ingratiating than those in New York. Of course, her publicists picked and chose the comments to report, as publicists are paid to do. In Buffalo in January, she sang the title roles in *Tosca* and *Aida*. These performances were part of a special program, sponsored by a leading businessman, to foster interest in classical opera. The *Buffalo Times* music critic raved about the “crystalline clarity” of Corona's voice with its “ample compass and power . . . for expression of both drama and lyricism.” Comments about her personal beauty were equally flattering in Chicago. *The Chicago Daily News* praised her portrayal of Amilcare Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* for “youthfulness, liteness, fervency and fire . . . beauty and grace,” as well as “exquisite singing . . .”¹⁷

Back home in New York, the critics seemed never to miss a strained high note. Still calling her a dramatic soprano in 1937, they gave more praise to her middle register. For women and men alike, the years seem to lower singing voices, and Corona was now 47. Her popularity with the general public had not waned, and in New York in October, a recital drew a large and enthusiastic audience to Town Hall. She was now a blonde, which made *The New York Sun* critic uncomfortable. He associated her voice with the “dark heroines of her operatic past,” Leonora of *Il Trovatore* and Donna Anna of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.



On February 7, 1947, Leonora Corona sang the role of Tosca with the Boston Grand Opera in Bloomington, Indiana. Pictured with her (left to right) are Charles Richard, Director, Boston Grand Opera Company; Horton (first name not known); fellow cast member Joseph Christea; and Stanford Erwin, Manager, Boston Grand Opera Company, and married to Leonora.

Still, he liked what he saw, a “glitter of white, crowned with a nimbus of fairness.” (Apparently, she wore a white satin gown, perhaps trimmed with sequins, with her newly blonde hair cut short and curled.) Once recovered from Corona’s altered appearance, he wished she would limit her programs to the Italian composers she sang so well. The selections by Mozart and Gluck, he wrote, were “out of her range and depth.” Other critics, too, praised her voice, and like *The Sun* writer, commented how, after ten years, she had not yet realized her full potential. Such remarks could be read in two ways, either that the reviewers were disappointed or that they anticipated still greater things from her.¹⁸

During these years, Corona sang regularly with the New York Grand Opera at the Manhattan Center, where the atmosphere was less formal than at the older Metropolitan. New York Opera ticket holders could enjoy cocktails

and dancing after the evening performances. She also sang with the Federal Symphony Orchestra in programs presented by the Works Project Administration at the W. P. A. Federal Music Theater on West 54th Street. Prices for these performances were adjusted for the conditions of the Great Depression, with tickets beginning at 55 cents and climbing to \$1.65 for the Saturday matinee. In the evenings, the most expensive seats were \$2.20.¹⁹

During the 1930s, opera stars did not enjoy public adoration equal to that of “pop” entertainers or film actors, yet seemed to have an accepted place in popular culture. In 1936, Corona was one of three opera stars to participate in the “Health, Wealth and Happiness” pageant during the birthday ball for President Franklin Roosevelt in New York. She also sang at the National Air Show Maneuvers at the Rainbow Shell at Manhattan Beach.²⁰

Perhaps more significant for her personal life, Corona sang with the Boston Grand Opera, both when the company went on tour and at the Opera House in Boston. This company's manager was Stanford Erwin, whom she married. As with other facts about her personal life, Corona withheld the date—and even the fact—of her marriage. Her art demanded all her time, she declared in a publicity release of 1933–34. She did not have time to marry.²¹ While unmarried women in general seemed required to explain their single state, in a generation when jobs were scarce, married women were particularly vulnerable to public disapproval if they continued to work outside the home. However much an opera singer's life differed from the lives of the general population, social attitudes and public expectations could affect any career.

Travel to widespread engagements somehow did not include Texas, at least not just then. Corona was invited to sing at the opening of the State Fair's Centennial Exposition to celebrate Texas independence. At first, she accepted. Later, she curtailed her program, then cancelled without giving a reason. Instead, on Saturday, June 6, 1936, she sang "Texas May I Never Wander" over NBC Radio.²² Fairgoers may have paused by a radio to listen—or not.

When Corona returned to Dallas in February 1939, she came to sing in Julia Smith's opera, *Cynthia Parker*, at the North Texas State Teachers College at Denton, later the University of North Texas. With *Thais* forgotten, or forgiven, the local press printed stories almost every day about *Cynthia Parker*. A delegation of long-time friends, former teachers, and colleagues greeted Corona when she arrived at Love Field. Days of rehearsal followed, as well as parties, luncheons, and receptions.

Like Leonora Corona, the opera's composer was a native Texan. Julia Smith was a graduate of the North Texas State Teachers College and held a masters degree in composition from New York University. Several of her works had already been heard in New York, and performances

of others were pending. Later, she would teach at the Juilliard and write a biography of Aaron Copeland.

By accepting the opera's title role, Corona again related herself to Texas, this time through a well-known historical figure. In 1836, Comanches kidnapped Cynthia Ann Parker, age nine, from her home near what would become Groesbeck. Twenty-four years later, Texas Rangers recaptured her, now 35 years old with a Comanche husband and three children. The opera depicts Cynthia Ann's emotional struggle between the claims of two cultures. She belonged to both, to one by birth and to the other by loyalty and close personal relationships.²³

The composition of the opera was very much in line with current artistic trends. Artists and musicians looked for inspiration to American themes and stories as opposed to imitations of European art. *The Dallas Morning News* reviewer praised Smith's "modernistic" music and her integration of Indian melodies and popular frontier ballads into the score. Instead of recitative, Smith relied on spoken passages to advance the story. Corona's arias, the chorus, and the Indian dancers evoked mood, atmosphere, and a sense of place and historical time. Critics saw the opera as a promise for "the future of American music," drawn from the cultures and history of "the plains and hills of the great West."²⁴

Leonora Corona was the production's only professional musician. The cast of fifteen actors with speaking parts, fifty dancers, and a forty-voice chorus were graduate and undergraduate students at the College. A faculty member at Temple Junior College sang the role of Cynthia Parker's daughter, Prairie Flower, and a music graduate student was her older son Quanah. Corona's understudy was a graduate from the Hockaday Institute of Music in Dallas. The thirty-piece orchestra included six musicians from the Dallas Symphony.²⁵

The Morning News critic had only compliments for Corona's "sumptuous" singing of "music suitable to her ringing dramatic timbre and

impassioned style.” Her “big moments [were filled with] fine intensity . . . and sculptured grace,” and with her spoken lines, she proved herself as able an actress as she was a singer. Two additional performances were planned at the Juilliard School in New York in the fall.

Cynthia Parker was, needless to say, a unique role in Corona’s career. In a way, it was also a farewell to Texas. On February 22, she flew back to New York after visiting old friends in Dallas for a few days. Before leaving, she mentioned plans for upcoming engagements in Buffalo and Philadelphia, as well as preparations for a solo concert tour in the spring.²⁶ Throughout 1940, she appeared to keep a busy schedule.

After 1941, her newspaper notices dwindled. Either she drastically curtailed her schedule, or she no longer employed a publicity agent. In June, she sang at the Gala Benefit for British War Aid at the Hotel Astor. If she had other engagements, *The Times* did not mention them. During World War II, her only notice in *The Times* was on April 23, 1944, when she sang in the New York Opera Association’s production of *Tosca* in Princeton, New Jersey. In 1947, two brief items appeared. The first was an announcement that Stanford Erwin, Director of the New International Opera Company, had signed Leonora Corona and six other singers for a series of performances at Carnegie Hall. The second was a notice of the International Opera’s season opening with a photograph of Corona rehearsing for *Aida*.²⁷ Three years later, in 1950, Leonora Corona retired from the stage at age sixty.²⁸

Of all the stories about her life and career, the last is the most mysterious. Researchers unable to find information after Corona’s retirement have speculated that she lived her final years abroad. Instead, they failed to find her because Stanford Erwin changed his name. As Mrs. Elliott Stanford, Corona kept Leonora as her given name for thirty-eight years in Miami, Florida, and died in 1988, aged 98.²⁹ The simplest explanation is that she and her husband chose to live in total privacy, though the decision to leave the music world could not have been an easy one. From

very early childhood, Leonora was a performer, and throughout her life music was the center of her existence.

As she had a lifetime of performing music, Leonora had long experience in living with her own fictions, in creating and maintaining a public image. That is, like many performers, she was well practiced at protecting what amounted to a redrawing of her life. Altering or merely embroidering the facts requires close attention to what has been published as opposed to what happened. At the least, Leonora needed to avoid contradicting herself; she had to remember what she said and be especially careful at interacting with newer acquaintances. Most likely, she was skilled in shielding herself as the occasion required. Perhaps constant pretense did not trouble her. After all, she had always been a performer with skills for balancing image with reality. After 1950 as throughout the years of her operatic career, Leonora Corona’s life was a performance. ■

NOTES

¹*The New York Times*, Nov. 25, 1927, p. 24 (hereafter NYT); unidentified clipping, New York Public Library Music Division, Leonora Corona File (hereafter NYPL Corona file); *Miami News*, November 25, 1927, p. 1.

²*The Dallas Morning News*, March 18, 1928, Education and Amusements, p. 5 (hereafter DMN); unidentified clippings, NYPL Corona File.

³DMN, April 29, 1928: I, 9, and Education & Amusements, p. 6; also May 2, 1929, p. 12.

⁴Signed Leonora Stanford, her Social Security application form, dated 1972, gives her accurate date of birth; the federal census for Dallas County in 1900 gave her age as nine. Censuses were usually taken early in the year. Her birthday was in October. Special remembrance for the late Russell Casey for his help with genealogical research.

⁵Cicero F Cohron Obituary, DMN, June 23, 1904, p. 14. Cicero F Cohron’s name does not appear in *The Historical List of Elected Officials of Dallas County, 1846-Present*, typescript prepared by the District Clerk’s Office, March 2007, Dallas County Law Library, Dallas County Courthouse. Nor does *The Biographical Directory of Federal Judges, 1789-Present*, published by the Federal Judicial Center and available at <http://www.fjc.gov/history/home.nsf/page/judges.html>.

⁶For Lenore's years in Dallas and her education, *DMN*, March 11, 1928, Education and Amusement Section, p. 5. *A History of The Dallas Federation of Women's Clubs, 1898-1936* (Dallas: Dallas Federation of Women's Clubs, 1936), 54. The city directory for 1906 lists Mrs. Cohron with the Texas Baptist University faculty.

⁷By one account, she left Dallas in 1914: *DMN*, May 9, 1929, p. 12. The city directories do not list her family after 1910.

⁸For brief mention of her audition with Gennaro Papi, *NYT*, November 16, 1927, section 1, p. 2; for the full story, Press Material 1933-34, #8, NBC Artists Service in NYPL Corona File. Also, *Dallas Times Herald*, April 24, 1928, section 1, p. 9, for an account of her singing in San Francisco. Gennaro Papi (1886-1941) succeeded Arturo Toscanini as principal conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in 1916 and conducted more than 600 performances there before his death.

⁹*NYT*, June 5, 1928, 21:3.

¹⁰*NYT*, February 23, 1929, 17:3.

¹¹*The Musician*, XXXIV, 4 (April 1929), 14

¹²Press Material #10, 1933-34 in NYPL Corona File.

¹³*DMN*, April 7, 1933, p. 5.

¹⁴For the young Corona and *Thais*, Press Material, 1933-34, #2, NYPL Corona File. The opera has an ironic ending, for while the monk succeeds in converting the wicked *Thais*, he loses his soul to his own worldly passions.

¹⁵For Mary Garden, unidentified clipping, NYPL Corona File, July 31, 1933; for Corona's defense of *Thais* and comment re: *The Girl of The Golden West*, *NYT*, July 31, 1933, clipping in NYPL Corona File. *DMN*, August 1, 1933, section I, p. 10.

¹⁶*New York Daily News*, March 13, 1939, no page, and March 31, 1939, p. 8; *New York Daily Mirror*, March 13, 1939, all clippings in NYPL Corona File.

¹⁷For Chicago, clippings dated April 24, and for Buffalo, May 25, 1937, NYPL Corona file.

¹⁸*New York Herald Tribune*, October 10, 1937; *NYT*, October 6, 1937, p. 29.

¹⁹Unidentified newspaper clippings, advertisements, and notices in the NYPL Corona file.

²⁰*NYT*, January 26, 1936; *Music Courier*, December 19, 1936.

²¹Press Material #5, 1933-34, NYPL Corona file.

²²*DMN*, April 15, 1936: I, 4; and June 3, 1936: I, 12.

²³For a provocative and engrossing study of how writers and filmmakers have used an actual historical event, see Glenn Frankel, *The Searchers* (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2013).

²⁴For one example, *DMN*, February 18, 1939, section I, p. 7.

²⁵*DMN*, February 11, 1939, I, p. 11; and February 12, 1939, section III, p. 12; February 16, 1939, section I, p. 15. February 17, 1939, section I, page 10; February 18, 1939, section I, p. 7; February 28, 1939, section I, p. 7; March 6, 1939, section V, p. 1. *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, February 12, 1939, p. 6; February 18, 1939, p. 4.

²⁶*DMN*, February 21, 1939, section I, p. 15.

²⁷Clipping, *NYT*, June 8, 1947, no page given. NYPL Corona File.

²⁸The article on Corona in *The New Handbook of Texas* (print version) cites Riemann's *Musik Lexicon*, supplementary volume [Erganzungband], but notes that it gives no source for the information.

²⁹Florida death notice for Leonora Stanford. Her mother's obituary, *Miami Herald*, March 8, 1964, 2-D, was headlined, "Mother of Ex-Met Star Dies." The former star was identified as Leonora Corona, now Mrs. Elliott Stanford. Until Annie Cohron died in 1964, she resided with her daughter as she had throughout Leonora's singing career.

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Echoes of the Twenties in East Dallas

BY MARK RICE

*J*ust east of the towering **AT&T data center** on Bryan Street in Old East Dallas are two substantial multi-story buildings whose size, location, and architectural details hint at vaguely prominent pasts despite a somewhat faded present. They are precisely the kind of buildings that inspire the curious among us to seek out their histories. One of the buildings, at the corner of Bryan and Peak, is identified by a stained, carved header just beneath its summit simply reading “Brannon.”

It was January 1924. Calvin Coolidge was still settling into the Oval Office, serving out the unexpired term of Warren G. Harding, who had died suddenly the previous August. Half a world away, Egyptologist Howard Carter had just uncovered the sarcophagus of King Tutankhamun. And in Germany, Adolf Hitler was about to stand trial for the aborted Munich Beer Hall Putsch. In business-friendly Dallas, though, Vaughan Brannon was proudly unveiling his new three-story cleaning and dyeing enterprise.

**Brannon's New Plant at Bryan and Peak Now Open
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The Brannon Building opened at Bryan and Peak in 1924, originally housing a cleaning business. Since then it has provided a home for a variety of businesses, including several restaurants.

As a young man, Vaughan J. Brannon had come to Texas from Alabama and started a cleaning business near the eastern terminus of Elm Street. The business prospered in this location for many years before continual growth induced Brannon to move his enterprise a few blocks north to the corner of Bryan and Peak. Noted Dallas architect H.A. Overbeck was engaged to design the new \$60,000 structure which opened in January 1924. It boasted 25,000 square feet of floor space, \$50,000 worth of modern machinery, and a small fleet of delivery vehicles.

By 1931, however, Vaughan Brannon's health was failing and he was forced to sell his business to Zenith-Casino Cleaners. A few years later, it

would be Norton Cleaners occupying the ground floor, with the second floor leased to a dance hall known as the Cavalcade Club. The third floor was occupied by Herbert Brothers Manufacturing, makers of work clothing.

Over the ensuing years, the building's fortunes undoubtedly rose and fell as the surrounding neighborhood changed. Golden's Furniture and Appliances occupied the ground floor for many years, from the late 1950s well into the 1970s. Over the past few decades, the building has housed a succession of neighborhood restaurants, including Café Brannon and Bangkok City Thai Restaurant. Ninety years on, the stately Brannon building is still serving the surrounding community.



This building at the corner of Bryan and Carroll opened in 1929, housing Mrs. Baird's Bakery. Today it is home to Dallas Bias Fabrics.

Just a block to the east of the Brannon building, at Bryan and Carroll, is another largely anonymous, time-worn ghost that surely hummed with activity in its heyday. The old building's fine construction should have commanded a better fate than the rusting window frames and graffiti-scarred brickwork that characterize it today.

In the early part of the twentieth century, Mrs. Ninnie Baird and her family moved to Texas from Tennessee, settling in Fort Worth. Mrs. Baird baked bread and pies in her home kitchen and often gave them away. After her husband became seriously ill, Ninnie Baird supported the family

by selling her baked goods to neighbors. Her home-based baking business was a big hit, and her sons were soon handling delivery routes on their bicycles. In 1918, with their business continuing to grow quickly, the Baird family constructed its first commercial bakery in Ft. Worth to handle the increased volume.

Ten years later, the Baird bakery business was ready to expand to larger Dallas. Son Roland was tapped as General Manager for Dallas, and a \$250,000 plant was planned for the corner of Bryan and Carroll. With a basement and two floors aboveground, the bakery could produce 3,500

loaves of bread per hour. When the plant opened in February 1929, it employed 100 people and was soon shipping 125,000 loaves per week. From the outset, the Baird bakery recognized the value of involving the public in their business, offering bakery tours that showcased the cleanliness of the operation. The company weathered the Great Depression and the World War II years and continued its rapid growth. By the late 1940s, the Dallas plant was hopelessly outgrown. Architect George Dahl was commissioned to design a larger,

more modern bakery on Mockingbird Lane near SMU. The new plant, occupied in 1953, offered twice the capacity of the vacated Bryan Street bakery. Within a few years, the American Beauty Cover Company was producing book covers from the old Mrs. Baird's plant on Bryan. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995, and today houses the operations of Dallas Bias Fabrics. Tarnished but unbowed, the old Mrs. Baird's bakery is still serving customers just as it did in 1929. ■



When the seven-story Maple Terrace Apartment House opened in 1925 it was the tallest apartment building in Dallas. The architect, Sir Alfred Bossom, chose the Mission Revival style for the U-shaped building using Texas missions as inspiration. An impressive exterior features a stucco finish with stone detailing, clay tile roofs, and two "watch towers." Instead of a common corridor layout, typical of the time, to access the apartments, the architect chose to break up the building into four separate sections. Each has its own elevator and stairwell opening onto a small lobby shared by only 3 apartments. The lob-

Maple Terrace 3001 Maple Avenue

bies feature original herringbone tile floors and elevators with cage doors and glass call buttons which still light up. The studio, 1 and 2 bedroom units could also be combined to form different sizes as needed. Since its construction, the building has been a haven for artists, designers, and professionals who enjoy the unique features and quiriness of this historic gem. Amazingly, Maple Terrace is not a City of Dallas Landmark or on the National Register of Historic Places, even though it potentially qualifies for both.

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From Harlem to SoHo

Perceptions of Deep Ellum

BY ERICA JOHNSON

*D*ee**p Ellum exists** as an imagined place in most Dallasites' minds, as it has since its days as a booming cultural center in the 1920s and 1930s.¹ Thus, in "Returning to Deep Ellum," in *The Dallas Morning News* in 1983, Henry Tatum wrote:

There is a peculiar psyche inside most human beings that makes us want to do dangerous things during those formative teen-age years of our youth. . . . for me and some of my classmates, the real test in those days [the 1950s] . . . was a trip to a place called "Deep Ellum." Even the name of this stretch of a half dozen blocks on the eastern edge of Downtown Dallas has an ethnic air of mystery about it. . . . Our parents had warned us against traveling the blocks of bars, second-hand clothing stores, record shops and shine parlors that were Deep Ellum. But we had to find out for ourselves that the notorious reputation of this area was based primarily on earlier days when persons really were taking their lives in their own hands to be there.²

Deep Ellum today is only a hint of the scene for popular culture it once was. Its cycle into, out of, and back into the center of Dallas life, in correlation with city planning and the changing desires of Dallas citizens, remains misunderstood or unrecognized.

The Writers' Program of the Works Project Administration (WPA) compiled information from 1936 to 1942, resulting in the section of *The WPA Dallas Guide and History* titled "Deep Ellum: Harlem in Miniature." The writers identified Deep Ellum as the areas between Preston and Good streets on Main and Elm. According to *The WPA Guide*, "Under the veneer of civilization and custom there runs in Deep Ellum the under current of jungle law; superstition, hatred, and passion."³ Part of the Deep Ellum culture described in this quote included liquor and marijuana. The writers for the WPA indicated the vibrancy and Bohemian nature of Deep Ellum, bustling with various shops, a movie theater, bars, cafes, and magic.

Deep Ellum had grown rapidly in the ear-



Honest Joe's Pawnshop was one of the more colorful emporia in Deep Ellum. It was operated by Rubin "Honest Joe" Goldstein, one of many Jewish merchants in the area.

ly 1900s, with a developing African-American community and a rich musical tradition, boasting a culture similar to that of New York City, especially Harlem.⁴ In 1925, *The Dallas Morning News* published an article comparing Deep Ellum to New York City. The article, entitled "See Li'l Old New York in Dallas," read, "There is nothing in New York to duplicate 'Deep El-lum' on Saturday night, with its succession of pool halls, pawn shops and second-hand clothing stores."⁵ Deep Ellum was a part of Dallas that never slept, much like New York City. As the *Dallas Gazette* described, "It is the one spot in the city that needs no daylight saving time because there is no bed-

time, and working hours have no limits."⁶ Famous artists, such as Blind Lemon Jefferson and Huddie Leadbetter, started out singing and playing guitar on the streets of Deep Ellum. Eventually, Deep Ellum became the center of race recording.⁷ White, Hispanic, and African-American artists performed in Deep Ellum.⁸ The Harlem culture did not live alone in Deep Ellum.

In addition to the dominance of African-American settlers in Deep Ellum, a Jewish population also thrived in the area.⁹ The African-American newspaper the *Dallas Express* commented, "Thank God for the Jews . . . their persecution saves our group from being alone. Misery loves

company.”¹⁰ Jews primarily made use of the area for starting up and maintaining family businesses, making up about 70 percent of pawn and thrift store owners.¹¹ This suggests that the white, Jewish shop owners and lively black culture attracted white Dallasites to Deep Ellum for both entertainment and bargain hunting. The area was a combination of “Harlem and the Bowery, Second Avenue and Delancy Street . . . where the sounds of early ‘Black Blues’ mingled with the dialects of Yiddish conversations and the calls ‘to get a bargain.’”¹² The train depot and Central Track provided a hub for the meshing of distinct groups of people, and the combination of interests worked well in Deep Ellum.

The diverse community in Deep Ellum pulled together during the Great Depression, but received mixed coverage in the local press. In 1932, *The Dallas Morning News* headlined, “Deep Ellum is at work – there are gardens back of stores, there are ‘favorin’ [favoring] sistuhs’ [sisters] who help the needy, with the ‘folks in general [general] wukkin’ [working] too.”¹³ The same article claimed a reduction in crime and an increase in kindness in Deep Ellum, but the positive image did not last long. Soon a story about slum clearance by the Federal Housing Administration put Deep Ellum in a negative light. In 1935, the *Morning News* reported, “Another Dallas negro problem is Deep Ellum. . . . There is a great need of improvement in this section as to avoid a black eye in the appearance of Dallas.”¹⁴ The negative perceptions depicted in the newspaper came through in popular culture as well.

Along with the hard work of the community through the Great Depression, the musical culture of Deep Ellum endured and reflected the mood of the 1930s. For instance, in 1935, the Lone Star Cowboys, led by white brothers Joe and Bob Shelton, recorded “Deep Ellum Blues.” The lyrics of the song reflected the function Deep Ellum served for blacks and whites, as well as some of the negative perceptions of the area. The following are the lyrics of “Deep Ellum Blues”:

When you do down in Deep Ellum
To have a little fun
Have your fifteen dollars ready
When the policeman comes.
(Chorus)

Chorus:
Oh, sweet Mama,
Daddy’s got them Deep Ellum blues.
Oh, sweet Mama,
Daddy’s got them Deep Ellum blues.

Once I had a sweetheart
Who meant the world to me,
But she hung around Deep Ellum
Now she’s not the girl for me
(Chorus)

When you go down on Deep Ellum,
Keep your money in your shoes
’Cause the women on Deep Ellum
Got them Deep Ellum blues.
(Chorus)

When you go down in Deep Ellum,
Keep your money in your pants
’Cause the redheads in Deep Ellum
Never give a man a chance.
(Chorus)

Once I knew a preacher
Preached the Bible through and through
But he went down in Deep Ellum
Now his preachin’ days are through.
(Chorus)

When you go down to Deep Ellum,
Keep your money in your socks
’Cause the women in Deep Ellum
Will throw you on the rocks.¹⁵
(Chorus)

The lyrics of “Deep Ellum Blues” indicate high crime in the area, including prostitution.¹⁶ Negative developments, such as those alluded to in “Deep Ellum Blues,” accompanied the hurried successes of the area. Patrol officer Tom Sebastian told *The Dallas Morning News*, “It’s pretty tough over in “Deep El-lum” and along the Central tracks a fellow has to keep his eyes skinned or he’ll sure get bumped off.”¹⁷ In addition, a chauffeur for a wealthy family in Dallas, Lang Wingard, stated, “It was dangerous to walk that particular [Elm] street. . . . Well, at that time, the law enforcement wasn’t as set like it is today [in 1974]. People would kill you and get out of it so easily for the amount of fifty dollars.”¹⁸

Deep Ellum declined due to several gradual developments in city planning and the development of Central Expressway, aiming to benefit the Central Business District and the suburbs.¹⁹ Although Deep Ellum was located adjacent to the Central Business District, planners did not consider the negative effects on the neighborhood when they focused only on the improvement of downtown. The highway concept, intended to decrease transportation congestion, originated in 1912 with publication of *A City Plan for Dallas*, commonly known as the Kessler Plan.²⁰ Civic leaders agreed with most of Kessler’s suggestions, and Dallas completed several projects, such as removing the T&P tracks from Pacific Avenue.²¹ Later city planning resulted in *Forward Dallas!*, or the Ulrickson bond program, under C.E. Ulrickson. The Ulrickson Committee called for the development of a more comprehensive plan for the city of Dallas.²²

As early as 1940, the city of Dallas began researching in order to update city planning from the recommendations of Kessler and Ulrickson. Although the prospect of a North-South highway through Dallas seemed ideal according to previous plans, the Citizens’ Traffic Commission, a division of the Dallas Citizens’ Council, wanted to carry out exhaustive analysis before undertaking such a costly venture.²³ The commission examined a study released by the Urban Land Institute (ULI)

in 1940, titled “Decentralization: What Is It Doing to Our Cities?” According to the ULI, “At present there is a trend in our cities, called decentralization, which is threatening a large part of our cities. . . . It is changing existing methods of transportation, of conducting business, and of living.”²⁴ In addition, the ULI noted the causes for decentralization in the cities included in the pamphlet’s research. Some similarities emerged between the information in the ULI report and the conditions of the city of Dallas. The following is one cause listed by the ULI: “The central business area is congested, especially with automobiles. . . . Automobile congestion, therefore, drives the pedestrian out of the business areas to a place where he can shop with greater convenience.”²⁵ In response to the information about decentralization, the Dallas Master Plan, under Harland Bartholomew from 1943 to 1945, took steps to reduce the effects on the urban areas. For instance, Bartholomew recommended changes in zoning and rebuilding of blighted areas, or slums, even going as far as suggesting the establishment of new black neighborhoods in the suburban areas.²⁶ With the focus on minority housing and – ironically – no mention of a highway causing problems associated with decentralization, the city of Dallas proceeded with the plans for Central Expressway, putting Deep Ellum in a state of jeopardy.

After over thirty years, threats implied by city planning to Deep Ellum materialized. In 1946, the Urban Expressway Office of the Texas Highway Department produced information on the actual construction, which was to take place “over a three-year post-war period.”²⁷ To make way for the new thoroughfare, the Dallas Railway & Terminal Company (DR&T) and H&TC agreed to tear out the railway tracks along Elm Street and Central Avenue (i.e., Central Track), which ran through Deep Ellum. Its proximity to the Central Track area had been significant in attracting business and industry to Deep Ellum.²⁸ On March 3, 1947, construction began on Central Expressway, cutting off Deep Ellum from downtown Dallas. In early January 1948, *The Dallas Morning News*



The only African-American theater in Deep Ellum adopted the name Harlem Theater, to associate with the legendary New York black community in Harlem.

reported, “Central Boulevard has Dallas over a barrel . . . Central Boulevard has grown from a comparatively modest project into a super expressway. . . . At today’s inflated prices its cost will be eighteen million dollars.”²⁹ The article celebrated the new expressway, but expressed concern about the expenditure of the city of Dallas for the construction. Other Dallasites worried about the cost of the highway to citizens, especially the effects on homes and business property values.

The citizens of Deep Ellum expressed the most concern about the changes resulting from the building of the expressway and other city planning issues. *The Dallas Morning News* detailed such complaints. On January 21, 1949, one headline read, “Pawn Shops on ‘Ellum’ Report Business is Off.” Various shopkeepers on Elm Street reported a decline in business. One even exclaimed, “‘Business? What business? It’s the worst since 1929.’”³⁰ In other words, the businessperson believed business in Deep Ellum was worse than at the beginning of the Great Depression. Another issue rousing the people in Deep Ellum was one-way streets, which the Dallas Citizens’ Council reopened for discussion as early as 1946.³¹ The *Morning News* also tracked the discussions of the one-way streets. One article stated, “Members of both the Citizens’ Council and Citizens’ Traffic Commission indicated . . . they believed the track [DR&T] removal would serve as added ammunition in the long fight to put a one-way traffic pattern into effect on Main, Commerce, Elm, and Pacific.”³² One citizen responded differently to the removal of the track than the Citizens’ Council and Citizens’ Traffic Commission. Eula Johnson stated, “Now that the streetcars are being taken off Elm Street, to my regret, let’s get rid of all vehicular traffic on Elm and have a comfortable highway for pedestrians. . . . Give us more room! A time like this demands it!”³³

Many African-American businesses remained after the decline in blues culture in Deep Ellum, utilizing the positive reputation of Harlem to boost their status with patrons. For instance, the only African-American theater in Deep Ellum adopted the name Harlem Theater, to associate the trade

inside with a black community of legend such as Harlem.³⁴ The Harlem Lunch Room served patrons from 2411 Elm Street.³⁵ Other places did not indicate the “ethnicity of commerce” inside the buildings, but the Sanborn Map Company revealed the race of the owners in 1951. Neither the Mirror Bar No. 2, at 2413 ½ Elm Street, nor the Green & White Café, at 2415 Elm Street, advertised an ethnic specificity in their names; however, the Sanborn map of Dallas labels both as “negro club[s].”³⁶ Other businesses with equally “color-blind” names did not receive such attention in the Sanborn maps, such as Harper Book Store, at 2612 Elm Street. A number of Jewish businesses in Deep Ellum moved west after the construction of the Central Expressway. Some simply moved to the western side of the new freeway, while others relocated their shops to the Central Business District.

The early Jewish immigrants of Dallas settled amongst the African Americans in Deep Ellum, but the Jews experienced a different world in that stretch of Elm Street.³⁷ Although some Jews managed to cross over into downtown Dallas, such as the owners of Neiman-Marcus, the majority remained in the near east side as shopkeepers.³⁸ For instance, Abe’s Pawn Shop, “also known as ‘Little Neiman-Marcus,’” opened at 2312 Elm Street in 1934 and Klar & Winterman Pawn Shop resided at 2310 Elm Street; both businesses remained active in the 1950s.³⁹ The Jewish population rarely reported any crime or fear while living in Deep Ellum until the 1930s. After the trains stopped coming and the railroad tracks came up in the 1940s, Deep Ellum declined and the Jewish citizens found it easier simply to move into the suburbs amongst the white Dallasites.⁴⁰

Despite the changes in Dallas during the 1940s and 1950s, the 1960s brought a film oblivious to most of the realities of Dallas and Deep Ellum. In 1960, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) released *All the Fine Young Cannibals*, a twisted love story between “a pair of bucolic Texans” loosely based upon the novel *The Bixby Girls* by Rosamond Marshall. Movie theaters across the United States screened the film, including Dallas’s Palace

Theater.⁴¹ Often the story echoes back to the 1935 song, “Deep Ellum Blues.” Intertwined with the odd love affair is a geographic tie at the heart of Dallas: Deep Ellum. Salome Davis, the leading female character, accompanies her romantic costar, Chad Bixby, to Deep Ellum after the funeral of Bixby’s father. Upon their arrival at a local blues house, the owner reveals that Bixby frequents Deep Ellum to release his emotions through playing his trumpet. On this trip, Bixby sees Deep Ellum as a haven from the drama surrounding his father’s death. Davis’s pregnancy with Bixby’s child creates a wild ride for both youths to New York City, but on separate paths. However, Davis and Bixby both return to Texas at the end of the movie. Although certain conclusions come from the interactions between the lead characters and Deep Ellum, the film makes other implications about the area.

Both *The Dallas Morning News* and the *New York Times* gave *All the Fine Young Cannibals* poor reviews, despite the variance in the regional perspectives.⁴² According to the *Morning News*, “‘Deep Ellum’ [in the film] is located as a Negro Rialto in Dallas filled with booze-joints and cat-houses looking like more famous thoroughfares of New Orleans and Memphis. . . . The youth of Texas . . . have had no such trouble finding themselves as in ‘Young Cannibals’”⁴³ Despite the views of Deep Ellum in the movie, the romanticized ideas of the area in the film are significant. From all indications, *All the Fine Young Cannibals* was a box office failure, mirroring the real life deterioration of Deep Ellum at the time of the film’s release.⁴⁴

Another reflection of the status of Deep Ellum in 1960 comes from the associations made between the area and negative circumstances in *The Dallas Morning News*. In January 1960, the issue of a dance hall came to public attention. A man named Elmer Guthrie filed a zoning request to put in such a facility on Elm Street, just outside of Deep Ellum. Attorney Mrs. Andrew J. Priest told the *Morning News*, “‘There will be underworld characters, switch blade experts and loose women brought in. You might have a dance hall

and you might have a “honky-tonk.” They have a bouncer—but he bounces them outside and that’s where they fight.””⁴⁵ The pessimism of the citizens about safety in Deep Ellum most likely resulted from the previous problems with crime in the area.⁴⁶

In addition to the crime in the area, structural disasters furthered concern for Deep Ellum. In 1961, the Department of City Planning prepared a report, *Dallas Central District*, for the Dallas Area Master Plan Committee, assessing the health of Dallas’s core areas.⁴⁷ The report detailed such elements as parking, zoning, and conditions of buildings located just East of Central Expressway, between Hawkins and Walton on Elm, Main, and Commerce.⁴⁸ On the grading scale utilized in the study, grade three included “older buildings in poor condition,” and grade four categorized “obsolete buildings in poor structural condition and definitely needing removal.”⁴⁹ All the buildings ranked grades three and four, and more than 50 percent of the structures were vacant. The report assessed the land near Central Expressway, to provide justification for construction associated with the freeway loop, completed in the late 1960s. Reports in the local news also contributed to the validation of the elimination of certain areas in order to accommodate the freeway loop. In 1968, with or without the Dallas news, the freeway loop construction commenced.

The creation of a freeway loop for Central Expressway required the elimination of the 2400 and 2500 blocks of Elm Street, once the most popular area of Deep Ellum, for the elevation of the highway. The demolition required for the elevated portion saddened some Dallasites. Helen Callaway, News Staff Writer for *The Dallas Morning News*, wrote:

A trail of destruction along Hawkins Street is part of the preparation for the multi-million-dollar elevation of Central Expressway through the central business district. Fallen landmarks along Deep Elm, Deep Main and Deep Commerce are part of same make-ready. . . . There is a melan-



Ross Graves operated a café in Deep Ellum. This photo was taken around 1950.

choly artistry in the vast piles of old bricks, miles of twisted steel, leaning towers, buckling walls, great broken stones, snaking wires, splintered lumber and assorted rubble. Drifts of memory float from the broken old buildings and cast a haunting sadness. . . . There is always a sense of death in the demolishing of a building, no matter how wonderful a Phoenix will rise from the ashes tomorrow.⁵⁰

Other writers for the *Morning News* also mourned the demolition of Deep Ellum in articles like Doug Deomeier's "Demolition Leveling Once-Noisy Deep Elm." Despite the sorrow,

the loop went up and Deep Ellum limped along without part of the street until it moved back into the headlines in the 1980s.

In 1983, the City of Dallas began the Near Eastside Study in hopes of reviving the area.⁵¹ According to the study, "The Near Eastside of the 1980s is an area with renewed opportunity."⁵² In this decade, Dallasites began to call for zoning changes in Deep Ellum. The Zoning Ordinance of 1947, also under Hulcy, zoned this M-1 Manufacturing. M-1 zoning included operations that manufactured "flour, dyes, hardware, metal products and insecticides . . . welding, gasoline storage and cotton ginning."⁵³ M-1 zoning allowed



This aerial photo, taken from the southeast, was made before the construction of Central Expressway cut Deep Ellum (in the center right) off from the central business district.

for limited housing, but only required units of 750 square feet per family. All parking was private. *D Magazine* featured a piece on the changes in planning related to Deep Ellum. “Joint Forces for Deep Ellum” read, “The city desperately wants to initiate downtown housing . . . the property owners want favorable zoning and street improvements.”⁵⁴ Despite the implication of cooperation in the *D Magazine* article, a controversy developed over Deep Ellum by early 1984. According to *The Dallas Morning News*, “Deep Ellum has become the newest front in Dallas’s planning war, with accusations of greed, deception and confiscation flying among the trenches. . . . At the heart of the

dispute is the issue of building rights: How large a structure can be built on a lot of a given size?”⁵⁵ In the midst of the controversy, interesting information about Deep Ellum emerged in the news.

Apparently, people were illegally residing in Deep Ellum in the early 1980s. *The Dallas Morning News* reported, “Under current city zoning restrictions, no one is allowed to live in the area. But behind dilapidated brick warehouse facades, about 150 to 200 artists and owners of small businesses live illegally in Deep Ellum.”⁵⁶ This revelation aided in the case of those who pushed for the rezoning of Deep Ellum. The same article continued, “Supporters hope to capitalize on Deep Ellum’s

unique atmosphere to create a neighborhood similar to SoHo in New York City.”⁵⁷ Another article in the *Morning News* thickened the debate about Deep Ellum. Douglas Newby wrote, “The real issue should be preserving the character and scale of this urban neighborhood.”⁵⁸ In April 1984, the Dallas City Council voted to rezone Deep Ellum and the revival began. However, claims for a Dallas SoHo did not hold up.

The same clash of reasoning for the rezoning of Deep Ellum continued into its rebirth. Articles in *The Dallas Morning News* pointed out the obvious problems with Deep Ellum’s art world that prevented it from becoming SoHo. The newspaper reported, “It takes artists as well as galleries to make an art community; by choice, most of the artists in deep Ellum and Fair Park stay behind closed doors. . . . Many are afraid that misconceptions about the popularity of the area will lead to increased rents, which will, in turn, make impossible for them to stay.”⁵⁹ As the article predicted, developers pushed out artists that resided in Deep Ellum illegally before the rezoning with high rents. *The Dallas Morning News* responded, “The artists will depart for the Cedars area of near South Dallas or Oak Cliff, taking with them the energy and vitality that attracted developers to Deep Ellum in the first place.”⁶⁰

Painters were not the only type of artists attempting to revive Deep Ellum in Dallas. In 1986 the black community looked back into Deep Ellum’s past with a production titled *Deep Ellum Blues*, by the Dallas Black Dance Theater, marking the group’s tenth anniversary. The event took place at the Majestic Theater. Blues musician David “Fathead” Newman composed original music for the production. The storyline echoed back to *All the Fine Young Cannibals* with the use of a love story in connection with Deep Ellum. In *The Dallas Morning News*, the playwright, Ted Shine, explained, “the production ‘really revolves around the story of two lovers caught up in the environment of Deep Ellum. And it will also show how they moved on after it all crumbled.’”⁶¹ However, the production did not include the dramatic revolution of the area, which led to historic Deep El-

lum’s Landmark Nomination in the mid-1990s.

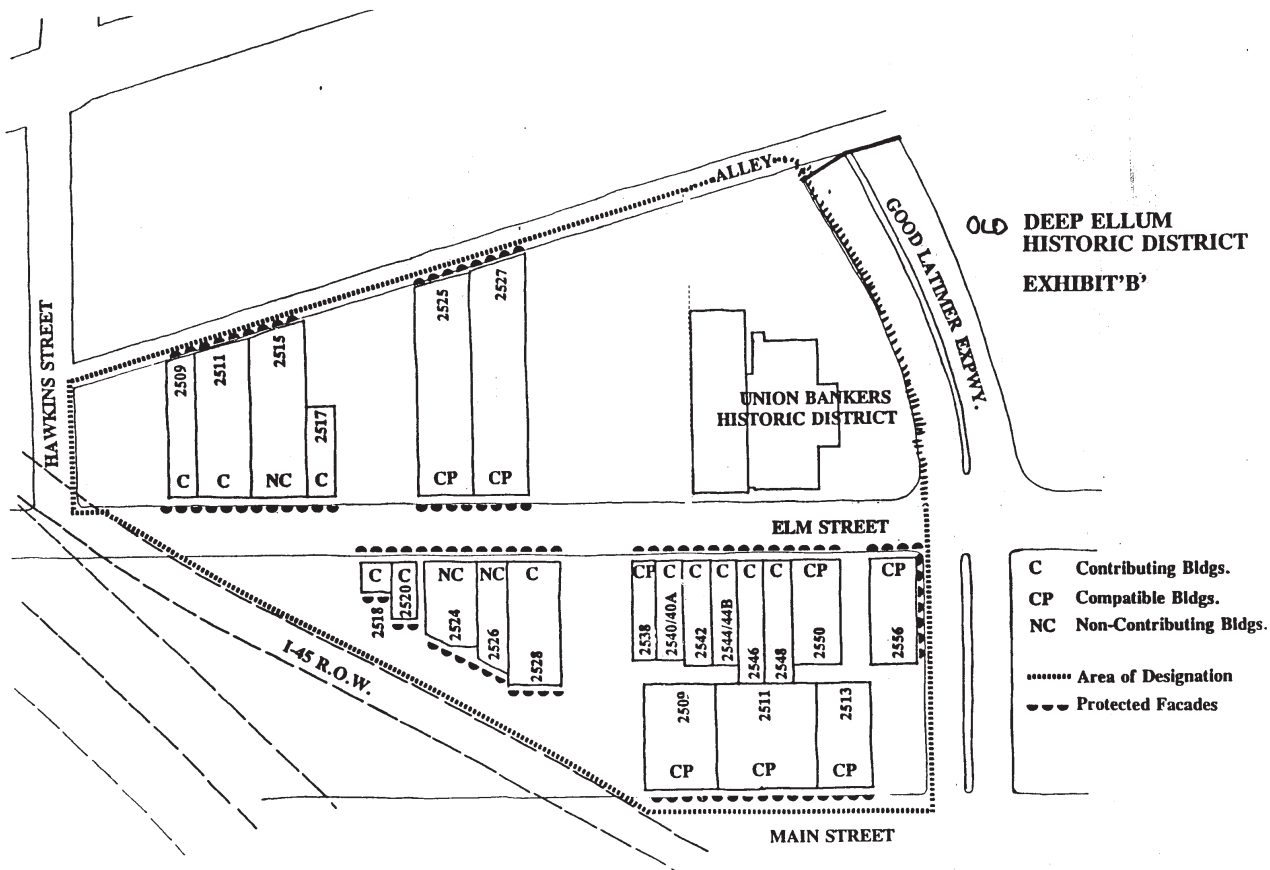
In 1995 Stan Solamillo drafted a Dallas Landmark Nomination for historic Deep Ellum. Solamillo defined Old Deep Ellum Historic District as “a two-block area that contains the only intact collection of buildings that are directly associated with an early twentieth century African-American ‘shopping and entertainment district.’”⁶² The redefinition of the area of Deep Ellum to only the 2500 blocks of Main and Elm streets resulted from the elevation of Central Expressway in 1969. Included in the form were the physical descriptions of some of the remaining structures within historic Deep Ellum and a detailed history of the area’s significance and changes over time.

The post-Central Expressway Deep Ellum was an imagined community, which was constructed and held by Dallasites long after its time as a space for cultural expression, innovation, and diversity had faded. Unfortunately, the same perceptions that made Deep Ellum popular, Dallasites later used to justify the careless destruction in the neighborhood. In reality, the mythic Deep Ellum has not quite come full circle in its revolution in the post-Central Expressway era. While Dallas musicians and artists still exhibit their work in Deep Ellum today and the area is a symbol of Dallas culture, the area does not resemble the community that it once was. Perceptions of Deep Ellum have been so indelibly embedded in the hearts and minds of Dallasites that reality has merged, imperceptibly, with visions of a storied past. ■

NOTES

¹The section of Elm Street just east of downtown received its moniker, “Deep Ellum,” from the African-American slang pronunciation or Eastern European Jewish phonetic spelling of the word Elm (El-lum). Alan B. Govenar and Jay F. Brakefield attribute this mythological perception of Deep Ellum to the “lack of solid historical research.” The end of the temporal scope (1860s-1940s) of their most recent book on the culture of Deep Ellum overlaps slightly where this article begins. See *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 1-16.

²Henry Tatum, “Returning to Deep Ellum,” *The Dallas Morning News*, March 20, 1983 (hereafter cited as *DMN*).



This map, showing the 2500 block of Elm Street, was created as part of a move to create a Deep Ellum Historical District. It indicated which remaining structures were most historic.

Deep Ellum Clipping Files, Texas/Dallas History & Archives, Dallas Public Library [hereafter cited as TDHA]. See also Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged* (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 1998), ix.

³Maxine Holmes and Gerald Saxon, eds. *The WPA Dallas Guide and History* (Dallas Public Library, Texas Center for the Book, University of North Texas, 1992), 294.

⁴African Americans originally came to Dallas County as slaves on farms. After emancipation, many became waged laborers for the railroad project in Dallas. Later, urban areas, such as Dallas, grew due to the Great Migration, the movement of African Americans out of the southern states and into mostly industrial areas after in the early 1900s. Jacqueline Woods, et al., eds. *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States* Vol. II (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2003), 683-5; Holmes and Saxon, eds. *The WPA Dallas Guide and History*, 294. Deep Ellum facilitated black migration with the Houston & Texas Central Railway (Central Track), the railroad that ran north from Houston through the area, as well as the Texas & Pacific, which ran west from Louisiana

through East Texas, bordering Deep Ellum on the north. Rose Biderman, *They Came to Stay: The Story of the Jews of Dallas, 1870-1997* (Austin: Eakin Press, 2002), 64.

⁵"Seeing Li'l Old New York in Dallas," *DMN*, June 28, 1925, sec. 7, page 8.

⁶J.H. Owens, "Old Ironsides," *Dallas Gazette*, July 3, 1937, quote in Holmes and Saxon, eds. *The WPA Dallas Guide and History*, 294.

⁷Race recording was the categorization used for all styles of African-American music in the 1920s and 1930s. See Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum and Central Track*, 25.

⁸Stan Solamillo, "Historic Deep Ellum," *Dallas Landmark Commission Nomination Form*, 1995. Dallas Municipal Archives [hereafter cited as DMA].

⁹Jewish immigration to the United States boomed in the 1880s. Not too soon after, the Jews began to move southward and westward for opportunity. The Galveston Movement brought Jews to Texas overland and by the port of New Orleans in the early 1900s. Biderman, *They Came to Stay*, 62-80; Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum*, 66.

¹⁰J.H. Owens, "Old Ironsides," *Dallas Express*, February

22, 1941, 16, quoted in Denise Ford, "Deep Ellum," M.A. Thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1985. *The WPA Dallas Guide and History* does not mention Jewish culture.

¹¹Ford, "Deep Ellum," 4.

¹²Biderman, *They Came to Stay*, 66. The Bowery, Second Avenue, and Delancy Street all exist in the East Side of Manhattan. Once filled with Jewish culture, various eateries, theaters, bars, and shops, this area served as the hub of Jewish culture in Manhattan.

¹³"Deep Ellum Weathers the Depression," *DMN*, June 26, 1932, sec IV, p. 1.

¹⁴"Slum Project," *DMN*, August 11, 1935, sec. I, p. 12.

¹⁵Joe and Bob Shelton, "Deep Ellum Blues," quoted in Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum and Central Track*, 56-57.

¹⁶See Solamillo, "Historic Deep Ellum," DMA; Ford, "Deep Ellum," 1985.TDHA.

¹⁷"'Dangerous Beats' of Dallas Police," *DMN*, May 3, 1925, sec. 7, p. 3.

¹⁸Lang Wingard, interviewed by Lee Krebs, *Reminiscences: A Glimpse of Old East Dallas*, Gerald Saxon, ed. (Dallas: Dallas Public Library, 1983), 133.

¹⁹During the planning process, engineers referred to Central Expressway as Central Boulevard. In July 1949, less than a month before the opening of the roadway, the Dallas City Council voted to change the name to imply speed over pleasure. "Central Expressway Readied for Opening," *DMN*, July 28, 1949, 2. To avoid confusion, hereafter the highway will be referred to as Central Expressway, regardless of the time in which it is being referenced.

²⁰The Board of Commissioners and the Board of Park Commissioners from Dallas, under the City Plan and Development League of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, hired George Kessler in 1910 to make suggestions on how to improve the city of Dallas.

²¹See "Pouring Dollars in Dallas Pockets," *Kessler Plan Salesman*, Autumn 1926. John W. Carpenter Papers, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington [hereafter cited as SC]

²²Robert Fairbanks, *For the City as a Whole: Planning, Politics, and the Public Interest in Dallas, Texas, 1900-1965* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1998), 51-55.

²³The Dallas Citizens' Traffic Commission formed in 1936 with the mission to improve traffic safety and efficiency for the residents of Dallas. The Dallas Citizens' Council came into existence in 1937. The group met monthly at the Baker Hotel for a nonpartisan discussion of civic issues.

²⁴Urban Land Institute, "Decentralization: What Is It Doing to Our Cities? A Preliminary Survey of 512 Reports by Expert Appraisers and Brokers from 221 Cities on What this New Force Is Doing to Urban Life" [hereafter cited as ULI], circa 1940, Introduction-1. Dallas Historical Society [hereafter cited as DHS].

²⁵*Ibid.*, 2.

²⁶Although it emphasized zoning and housing concerns, the Dallas Master Plan did not focus specifically on the area of Deep Ellum. Instead, the plan focused on systems within the city as a whole, such as parks and schools or housing. Fairbanks, *For the City as a Whole*, 129, 131-132.

²⁷Dewitt C. Greer, *Dallas Central Boulevard-Expressway: A Federal, State, County, and City Project*, May 1946 (Dallas: Texas Highway Department), 7. DHS.

²⁸Solamillo, "Historic Deep Ellum," DMA.

²⁹Allen Quinn, "Cost of Central Boulevard Putting City in a Bad Pinch," *DMN*, January 18, 1948. TDHA.

³⁰Quoted in "Pawn Shops on 'Ellum' Report Business is Off," *DMN*, January 21, 1949, sec. 1, p. 4. Although the article does not attribute the loss of business to the expressway, it is more than a coincidence that business declined after the removal of the Central Tracks and urbanization increased.

³¹Dallas Citizens' Council Minutes, November 12, 1946. John W. Carpenter Papers, SC.

³²Clint Page, "1-Way Traffic Plan Campaign Launched," *DMN*, May 22, 1949, sec. 1, p. 1.

³³Eula Johnson quoted in "Letter from Readers," *DMN*, September 12, 1949, sec. 1, p. 2.

³⁴While it is not completely clear in the historical record when the theater opened or if it ever operated under another name, Deep Ellum called the location the Harlem Theater in the 1930s. See Kevin Pask, "Deep Ellum Blues," *Southern Spaces: An Interdisciplinary Journal about Regions, Places, and Cultures of the US South and Their Global Connections* (2007) and Greata Kaul, "Vignettes of building in 'Lost Dallas,'" *DMN*, July 14, 2012. The Harlem Theater closed in 1962. Ford asserts that this was due to the rise in the popularity of television. Ford, "Deep Ellum," 1985, 8. TDHA.

³⁵The Sanborn Map Company did not list the Harlem Lunch Room as a black establishment, possibly due to the obvious name.

³⁶Sanborn Map Company, 1951, TDHA.

³⁷Govenar and Brakefield provide evidence for favorable relations between African Americans and Jews in Deep Ellum, possibly even "more progressive than in other areas of Dallas" due to "a shared heritage of suffering and discrimination." See *Deep Ellum*, 75, 77.

³⁸Herbert Marcus, Sr. established the original Neiman Marcus store at 1618 Main Street in downtown Dallas in 1907.

³⁹Biderman, *They Came to Stay*, 69.

⁴⁰See also Stephanie Cole, "Finding Race in Turn-of-the-Century Dallas," *Beyond Black & White: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the U.S. South and Southwest* (College Station: Published for the University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A&M University, 2004).

⁴¹The film does not indicate a time setting, nor do the newspaper reviews. *The Bixby Girls* is set in the period just after World War I and into the 1920s. Rosamond Marshall,

The Bixby Girls (New York: Doubleday, 1957). *All the Fine Young Cannibals*, prod. Pandro S. Berman and dir. Michael Anderson, 1 hr. 52 min., MGM, 1960, videocassette. "All the Fine Young Cannibals' Arrives," *New York Times*, September 23, 1960.

⁴²"All the Fine Young Cannibals' Arrives," *New York Times*, September 23, 1960; "Where'n Texas You-All From?" *DMN*, September 29, 1960.

⁴³"Where'n Texas You-All From?" *DMN*, September 29, 1960. Neither the film nor the reviews make any indication of a white, Hispanic, or Jewish influence or population in Deep Ellum.

⁴⁴Box office numbers are not available for this film. The assertion of its lack of success is attributed to this lack of information, poor reviews of the movie in the *DMN* and the *New York Times*, and the rare availability of the film for purchase. Major distributors, including those online, do not carry this film. The copy of the film reviewed for this essay came from www.ebay.com.

⁴⁵Mrs. Andrew J. Priest quoted in "Dance Hall Zoning Bid Protest," *DMN*, January 21, 1960.

⁴⁶In the 1950s, the case of Harry R. Urban put Dallasites in turmoil. Urban was accused of operating a policy racket amongst the black population. See *DMN* 1952.

⁴⁷*Dallas Central District* was the fifth and final report prepared by the Dallas Master Plan Committee between 1955 and 1961 while headed by D.A. Hulcy, president of the Lone Star Gas Company. Nicknamed the Hulcy Committee, it differed from the Dallas Master Plan under Bartholomew in devoting particular attention to the downtown area. In addition,

the Hulcy Committee did not compose a comprehensive plan for the city. Fairbanks, *For the City as a Whole*, 214-217.

⁴⁸The addresses between Hawkins and Walton range from 2400 to 2900 on Elm, Main, and Commerce. This area encompasses Deep Ellum.

⁴⁹*DCD*, 38.

⁵⁰Helen B. Callaway, "A Forerunner to Progress," *DMN*, September 14, 1968.

⁵¹See also Article 269.

⁵²*Near Eastside Area Planning Study*, DMA.

⁵³*DCD*, 93-4.

⁵⁴Aimee Larrabee, "Inside Dallas: Joint Forces for Deep Ellum," *D Magazine*, July 1983, 11.

⁵⁵George Rodrigue, "Battle Brewing in Deep Ellum," *DMN*, February 26, 1984, 37A-38A.

⁵⁶Mark Miller, "Deep Ellum's 'Secret' Dwellers Vocal on Zoning," *DMN*, March 8, 1984, 23A.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸Douglas Newby, "Controversy in Deep Ellum," *DMN*, March 10, 1984.

⁵⁹"Dallas SoHo Reports Disputed," *DMN*, c. March 20, 1984.

⁶⁰"Deep Ellum: Developers Paint Artists into a Corner," *DMN*, October 25, 1984.

⁶¹Holly Williams, "'Deep Ellum Blues' to Offer Glimpse of Past," *DMN*, September 13, 1986.

⁶²Solamillo, "Historic Deep Ellum," DMA.

OLD RED MUSEUM

OF DALLAS COUNTY HISTORY & CULTURE

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The museum is open daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is located adjacent to Dealey Plaza at 100 South Houston Street, Dallas, Texas. Visit www.oldred.org or call 214.745.1100.



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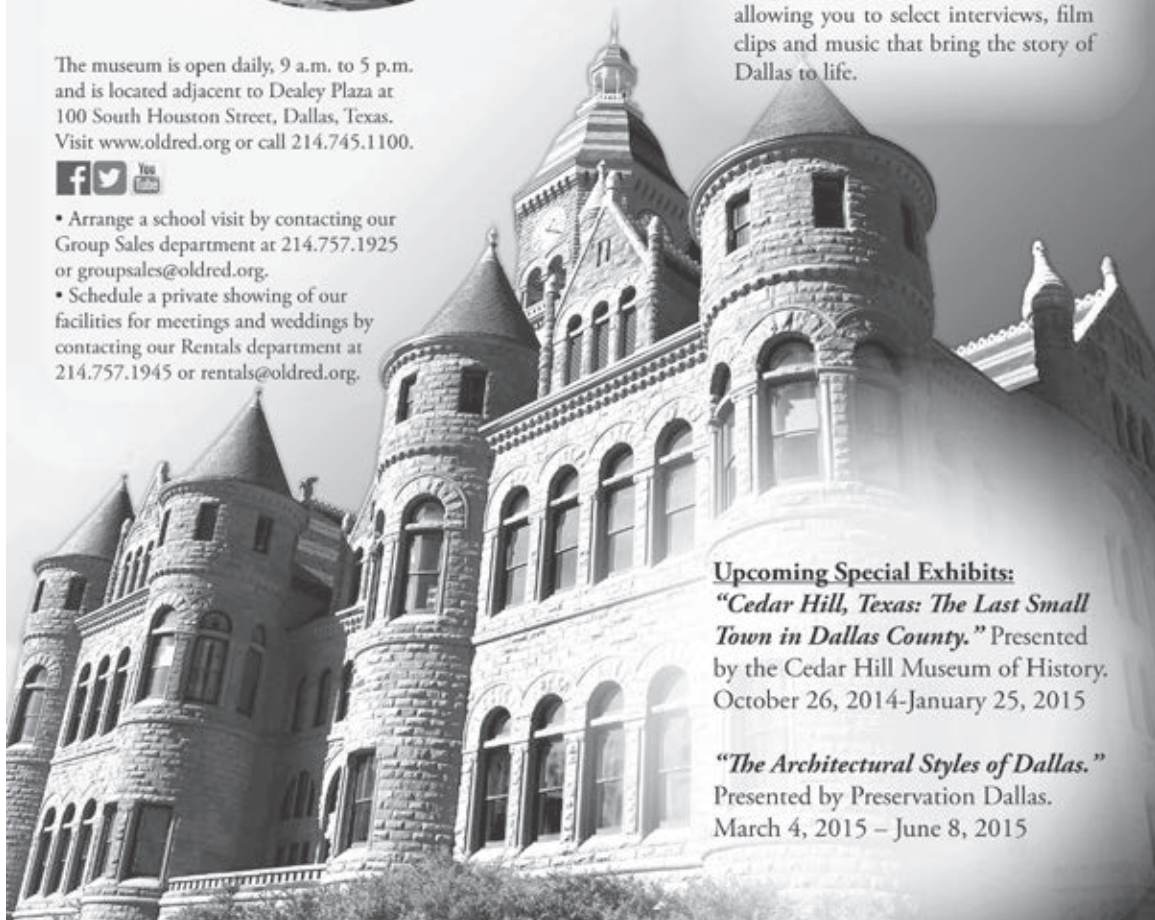
The Old Red Museum of Dallas County History and Culture provides visitors with engaging experiences that help them to discover the fascinating stories of Dallas County's pioneers, outlaws and entrepreneurs from prehistory to the 21st century.

Set within the historic walls of the "Castle in the City", iconic artifacts and historic images are enhanced with theaters and touchscreen kiosks allowing you to select interviews, film clips and music that bring the story of Dallas to life.

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"The Architectural Styles of Dallas." Presented by Preservation Dallas. March 4, 2015 – June 8, 2015





Housing Dallas Families at Mid-Century

BY KERRY ADAMS

*D*allas was the center of the “Sunbelt” in the 1950s and 1960s. Suburban growth exploded, with most of the development focused northward in North Dallas, Richardson, Carrollton, and Farmers Branch. Irving’s population also ballooned in the 1960s, while Oak Cliff spread southward to Interstate 20. The population began to diversify, with a slow but steady growth of Hispanic immigrants and the introduction of refugees from Asia and the Middle East. The geographic spread of residential neighborhoods encouraged the construction of new indoor shopping malls, such as Big Town and NorthPark. Richardson’s “high tech corridor” was only one of many suburban areas that drew employment. Downtown remained the principal shopping and business center, but its days were numbered.

Dallas in the 1960s

The population of the City of Dallas grew from 679,684 to 844,401 during the 1960s, an increase of 24%.

The population increase in Dallas County was even more dramatic, from 951,527 to 1,327,695, or 39%.

Aviation and the high tech field, led by Texas Instruments, were the new growth industries.

Dallas remained a banking and insurance center, and oil was still a major part of the economy.

The ATM machine was invented in Dallas in 1968 by Don Wetzel, a vice president at

Dallas-based Docutel, after he got frustrated while standing in a long line to cash a check.

What Was New for the 1960s House?

Many houses were designed with wide overhanging eaves as sun shields.

Aluminum windows did not require painting.

Exterior maintenance was almost eliminated with brick exteriors and stained rough-sawn cedar trim.

As incomes rose and families grew, many sought homes with an attached two-car garage.

Built-in furniture (bookcases, china closets, desks, and vanities) afforded more storage.

Multi-function rooms were emphasized over the formal living and dining rooms.

Cathedral ceilings created the illusion of more space.

Master bedrooms often had an adjoining bathroom.

Acrylic wall-to-wall carpeting offered easy care.

Vinyl and quarry tile flooring were popular choices for kitchens, baths, and entries for durability and ease of maintenance

Dishwashers were becoming standard equipment.

Central air conditioning was no longer a luxury—it was a standard amenity.

Optional equipment ranged from brick fireplaces and garbage disposals to radio/intercom systems.

Fox & Jacobs



only fox & jacobs brings you
THE COMPLETE PRICE RANGE IN HOMES
\$12,950-\$30,000

forecast
\$12,950 - \$15,950

- 1 Richardson
- 2 Garland
- 3 Irving
- 4 Carrollton

accent
\$15,950 - \$19,500

- 5 North Dallas
- 6 Richardson

flair
\$21,950 - \$30,000

- 7 Glen Cove (North Dallas)

One of Fox & Jacobs' first houses in Carrollton, constructed in 1947, had not changed much when this photo was taken in the late 1970s. But the home builders quickly progressed beyond the traditional styling of this cottage.

One of Dallas's leading home builders in the 1960s was Fox & Jacobs, which constructed nearly 5,000 dwellings during the decade. Dave Fox, Jr. and Ike Jacobs initially formed a partnership in 1947 with a \$20,000 investment.¹ The company built six houses its first year, all in the City of Carrollton. One of them, located at Random and Donald Streets, was built in the Minimal Traditional style with details such as multi-paned double-hung windows and clapboard siding.² Today, the house is greatly altered from its original appearance.

Business was slow until after the Korean War, but that gave Fox some time to think about the importance of marketing and reaching middle-income customers with innovative approaches. He went to California to study new housing developments and came away with several ideas. Foremost, the Dallas market strictly sold empty

houses. On the West Coast, Fox saw fully-furnished models that seemed to make prospective buyers feel at home. Eventually, Fox was able to convince California designer Tony Pereira to assist in "staging" three homes in Dallas.³ The model homes were an instant success and gained the fledgling company some much needed publicity to expand its business. Fox & Jacobs undertook its first large-scale development at the 138-unit Timberbrook Estates subdivision at Marsh Lane and Walnut Hill. The homes were dubbed "New Horizon" models, a branding tactic that established Fox's desire to sell the company's values of quality, service, and convenient amenities.⁴

In 1956, local advertising genius Sam Bloom assisted in developing and copyrighting a more successful slogan, "Flair for Living." Based on General Motors' line of low, moderate, and high-end automobiles, the company eventually

Fox & Jacobs



By 1962 Fox & Jacobs was advertising three different models of houses, priced for different markets, some as inexpensive as \$12,950.



This advertising booklet for Fox & Jacobs' "Flair" homes promoted the company's awards and its "firsts."

expanded beyond its initial offering of "Flair" homes to include lower priced models which were branded "Forecast" and "Accent." In total, each one was designed for budgets ranging from \$12,950 to \$30,000.⁵

The company's first "Flair for Living" development in the Highland North subdivision at Marsh Lane and Merrill Rd was a total success. Within six months, Fox & Jacobs sold nearly every one of the 135 residences.⁶ Flair South debuted in 1957 with model homes in South Oak Cliff bounded by Ledbetter Drive and South Polk Street. Although a late 1950s recession slowed the development's completion, eventually 250 homes

were constructed.⁷ In 1958, ground-breaking ceremonies were held for Park Forest, a 200-home development located at the southwest corner of Marsh and Forest Lanes. Park Forest, built as a master planned community with a swimming pool, elementary school and shopping center, gained the company national acclaim. *House and Home Magazine* recognized Fox & Jacobs through a 1958 Award of Merit in residential design and construction, while *Parents' Magazine* applauded its designs as "The Best Home for Families with

Fox & Jacobs

Awards

The quality of the Fox & Jacobs home has been consistently outstanding that it has been recognized by some awards for home building magazines more any other builder in America.

American Builder -- Top "Editor's Value" Award
American Home Magazine -- "Best Home for the Money in Texas"
Parents' Magazine -- "Best Home for Families with Children"
McCall's Magazine -- "Most Editor Award"
McCall's Magazine -- "Outstanding Feature Award"
Practical Builder -- "The Home Builder Award"
Good Homekeeping -- "Good Homebuilding Award"
Home & Garden -- "Editor's Choice"
Home & Home -- "Best Homeing Award"
Look Magazine -- "Award for Distinctive Excellence in New Homes"
Parents' Magazine -- "Excellence Home Award"
Real Estate of Home Builders and Other Local Institute -- "Award of Merit for Neighborhood Development"

Homebuilding "Firsts"

- First to engineer homes for air conditioning with economical operating costs.
- First to engineer reinforced concrete foundations.
- First to establish a customer service department.
- First to plan neighborhoods specifically for families with children.
- First in pioneering economical, easy-to-maintain interior and exterior materials.
- First to offer long-term floor warranties.
- First to establish a permanent research facility working in conjunction with the nation's leading home products manufacturers.
- First to inspect and offer "warranted soundness."
- First to establish treated home brand names (Flair and Accent) and to maintain a history of excellent resale value.
- First to offer outstanding price and material combination by one of the country's leading associations, C. Tracy Perkins of Beverly Hills, California.

Flair 6517

Flair NORTH DALLAS

PLAN NUMBER	GLEN COVE SALES PRICE	AIR CONDITIONED SQUARE FOOTAGE	TOTAL SQ. FEET
699	\$15,000.00	1132	2210
698	\$12,000.00	977	1720
691	\$12,000.00	1046	2040
692	\$11,000.00	1022	2000
693	\$12,000.00	1032	2041
694	\$12,000.00	1016	2010
695	\$11,000.00	1007	1980
697	\$12,000.00	1084	2140

*All include Automatic Windows, Fireplaces, Porch, Air Conditioning, Veneer, Range Hood, Gas or Electric, Dishwasher and Stove.

Children” and *American Home Magazine* touted Fox & Jacobs homes as “The Best Home for the Money in Texas.”⁸ This extensive market exposure quickly led to the creation of another group of “Flair” homes in the Glen Cove subdivision at Midway and Forest Lane.

By 1959, the success of Park Forest and Glen Cove, whose high-end houses were selling at \$35,000, brought numerous inquiries for a lower priced home. Fox & Jacobs introduced mid-range models named “Accent” that were L-shaped ranch homes. Built at Royal Lane and Channel Drive, the tract-like houses were designed by Tony Pereira and F&J’s own Parker Folse.⁹ Similar exterior details, such as vertical siding and exposed roof rafters, were employed by Milton Barrick in architectural renderings for Irving’s Northgate Homes. Though some may have considered the “Accent” houses as simplified versions

of the California Contemporaries offered by Dallas’s Ju-Nel Homes, they were quickly received by middle-class families. Nearly half of the 500 houses were sold at a price range of \$14,500 and \$18,000, before the models were even decorated.¹⁰

Fox & Jacobs faced setbacks too: its 1960 Les Jardins development at Royal Lane and Midway Road failed to gain the attention of custom home buyers who were willing to spend \$35,000 to \$50,000 for slightly altered versions of “Flair” models. Still, the company built 2,064 houses between 1960 and 1964 as it expanded into Carrollton, Farmers Branch and Richardson.¹¹

Architecturally, Fox & Jacobs designs were conservative. The developers excelled at marketing a lifestyle based on the best-selling rectilinear ranch house. Multiple facades for the same floor plan enabled buyers to choose between several styles that were prevalent in the 1960s -- Tradi-

Fox & Jacobs

YOU *Design* **YOUR OWN HOME**

CHOOSE ANY BEDROOM WING

Two, three, four or five bedrooms . . . back-to-back or separated baths . . . powder room . . . choose whatever fits your needs.

CHOOSE ANY LIVING-DINING WING

Kitchen-family combination . . . separate dining room . . . living-dining combination . . . select anything you desire.

CHOOSE ANY SERVICE AREA

With or without utility room . . . game room . . . or half bath. All wings are perfectly interchangeable. Plan your home around your living habits. The home is you . . . and your ideas.

OVER 100 PLANS TO CHOOSE FROM

Ask a **FOX AND JACOBS** Architectural Consultant for your set of plans. With such a wide selection of wings available, an infinite number of combinations are possible. But Fox and Jacobs goes further. An Architectural Consultant will assist you with your own

FOR EXAMPLE

Suppose you are a family with four children (two boys, two girls) and a budget. You might well select wings to compose the four-bedroom — separated bath plan you see here. Almost the entire family can use the baths at once. While Dad is shaving and dressing in the dressing compartment of one bath.

This early Fox & Jacobs ad offered home buyers the option to select features from several different floor plans.

tional/Colonial (visualize Darrin & Samantha Stephens' house from television's "Bewitched"); European/French (influenced by the tastes of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis); and 1960s Contemporary (i.e. Mike & Carol Brady's house from television's "Brady Bunch").

Ike Jacob's death in 1965 caused immediate changes for the company. It was briefly owned by Texas Industries, Inc., until Dave Fox built up enough capital to buy it back in 1970. Fox & Jacobs found its sweet spot in building mass numbers of their low-priced "Today" line, which

was the updated branding term for its "Accent" homes. With the aid of pre-fabricated components, "Today" homes sprang up in communities like Grand Prairie, Cedar Hill, Lewisville, Plano, and Garland. Between 1968 and 1971, the company built and sold 4,103 houses.¹² Fox merged the company with Centex Corporation in 1972, under which Fox & Jacobs became synonymous with housing developments like The Colony that eventually grew into an entire city. The Fox & Jacobs brand name was retired in 1993.

Centex Homes



Tom Lively was one of the founders of Centex Construction Company, which eventually became the top housing constructor in the nation.



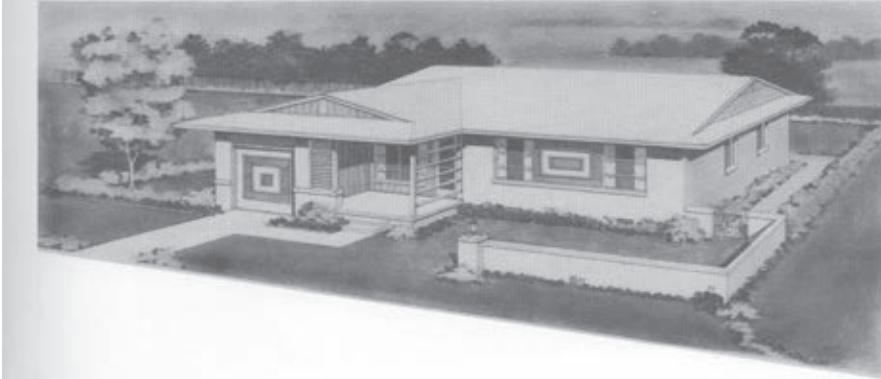
The opening of Centex's Elk Grove Village, near Chicago, in 1956, drew huge crowds. The development served as a prototype for subsequent construction in Dallas.

Centex Construction Company was founded in 1945 by Tom Lively, a young entrepreneur, and Ira Rupley, a successful Dallas land developer. Centex's first project broke ground in 1949 with a 300-unit subdivision in Dallas, whose average sale price was \$6,500.¹³ By 1956, Centex had quickly become a volume leader by constructing over 9,000 dwellings in Texas, California, Illinois, and Idaho, 900 of which were built in suburban Fort Worth.¹⁴ The same year, it gained recognition for a development in suburban Chicago named Elk Grove Village. Just recently, a professor from Bryn Mawr College discovered a link between Centex and the Dallas-based architectural firm of Milam & Roper, which designed the Casa Linda Shop-

ping Center and built homes in the Casa Linda and Casa View neighborhoods.¹⁵ There is some speculation that Milam & Roper designs were built at Elk Grove Village. Comparing a photograph of model homes in Elk Grove with Milam & Roper's "30 Fine Homes book #4," reveals a few striking similarities with Plan #319.

A 1958 newspaper article provides documentation for the company's development of its own brand names, in step with competitor Fox & Jacobs. Centex chose to identify its seven floor plans and twenty-one exterior designs under a "Décor Homes" umbrella. Two of the seven floor plans were named "Bordeaux Décor Home" and "Picardy Décor Home."¹⁶ Their premiere took place among 270 homes that were constructed in

Centex Homes



HOUSE AREA : 1129 SQ. FT.

FRONT PORCH : 76' •
 REAR STOOP : 14' •
 GARAGE : 299' •

PLAN NO. 319.

FROM THE OFFICE OF :

Milam & Roper
 Designers.

The Dallas-based architectural firm of Milam & Roper built homes in the Casa Linda and Casa View neighborhoods. Its “Plan #319” bears a striking resemblance to houses in Centex’s Elk Grove Village.

phase one of the Johnston Park development at Webb Chapel and Valley View Roads. Built in the \$13,500 price range, all models were designed by C. Sidney Milam & Associates of brick construction with three bedrooms, two baths, and double garages. Los Angeles designer Tony Pereira was contracted to develop paint palettes and design the interiors of model homes.¹⁷ Meanwhile, three other neighborhoods were taking shape – Country Club Estates off Gus Thomason Road in Casa View; Oakland Hills, near South Beckley and Camp Wisdom Road in South Oak Cliff; and Inglewood Park in Grand Prairie. Projections were

made for a total of 1,200 homes to be completed by the end of 1959.

Centex rapidly diversified into a large scale construction company by developing half a dozen shopping centers. In 1960, it became the number one housing construction company in the nation and changed its name to Centex Corporation. Nine years later, Centex went public with 500,000 shares of stock, \$10 million net worth, and \$100 million annual gross revenue.¹⁸ Centex became a subsidiary of Pulte Homes in 2009 and its name is still among the conglomerate’s four brands.

Ju-nel Homes



The low-pitched roof, deep eaves, and large expanses of glass in this house at 9745 Wisterwood Drive are common features in Ju-Nel Homes.

The partnership of Lyle Rowley and Jack Wilson originated in their work with architect Howard Meyer on Temple Emanu-El and the luxury apartment tower at 3525 Turtle Creek. The duo founded Ju-Nel Homes in 1958 – the name derived from a contraction of their wives’ names, Julie and Nelda. Similarities between the work of iconic California architects Joseph Eichler and Cliff May can be made with Ju-Nel’s designs. Primarily, all three designed with large expanses of glass to maximize the relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces. Ju-Nel and May’s home designs bear an even closer resemblance in that they both incorporated vertical wood siding with low-pitched roofs and extended soffits.

However, what sold well in California met with initial skepticism in conservative Dallas. Rowley and Wilson’s designs were so groundbreaking, that they couldn’t find easy financing, so they started out with conventional ranch homes to build capital. The majority of middle class families preferred boxy ranch style houses, shying away from more unusual home designs. Conversely, Ju-Nels were widely welcomed by Dallas’s creative class — including Kim Dawson, Stan Richards, and a conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Walter Hendl, who undoubtedly appreciated custom homes that were built in concert (no pun intended) with hilly terrain and natural vegetation.¹⁹

Ju-nel Homes



The modernist design of this house was also conceptualized and built by Ju-Nel. Completed in 1960 at 10226 Vinemont it was probably viewed with skepticism in conservative Dallas.

Ju-Nel interiors promoted open floor plans and clerestory windows to provide expansive interior spaces. Rooms were often divided with custom-made Japanese screens, while accent walls were dressed with smooth South African wood paneling that created a subtle glow. The team fervently believed in preserving existing trees on building sites—often notching out soffits to allow them room to flourish. Fifty years later, these houses are captivating a new generation of proud homeowners who have created a website dedicat-

ed to their appreciation and conservation. At last count, nearly 100 homes have been documented as Ju-Nels, all of which are located in the neighborhoods of Casa Linda, Eastwood Estates, Lake Highlands, Old Lake Highlands, Lake Park Estates, Lochwood, Lochwood Meadows, and White Rock North.²⁰ The majority of these homes were built at the height of the company's success between 1960 and 1965. Lyle Rowley left the partnership in 1963 and Jack Wilson kept the business going at a slower pace until his retirement in 1978.

Northgate Homes



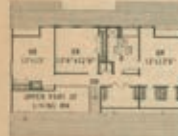
Price: \$21,500 with land • Living area: 2283 sq. ft. • Builder: National Real Estate Development Corp. • Designer: Milton Sarick

IRVING, TEXAS

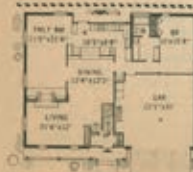
**Good news—
a big home for
a modest lot**

■ Because it's less than 50 feet long, this winning home will easily fit the small suburban lot. Yet, inside there is Texas-size space. For example, look at the unusually large storage closets on the second floor (see plan, right). Or consider that, in addition to nearly 2300 square feet of living area, the house packs in a two-car garage with storage space of its own.

This home has a versatile floor plan, too. Think about the first-floor bedroom for a moment. It could serve as the master bedroom for parents with a parcel of youngsters; could accommodate a maid (for the family that can afford one), or be home for a mother-in-law. If the family needs only three bedrooms, this spare could be converted into a library or workshop. As if this weren't enough, the home is sold with central air conditioning, built-in range and oven, range hood and fan, garbage disposer unit, automatic dishwasher, and Venetian blinds, plus eight trees and 18 shrubs. Two-way fireplace is also included.



Second floor has exquisite bathroom. More than one can use it—with privacy. Hall to left of stairs is a balcony with wrought-iron railing. It overlooks living room.



Northgate's award-winning "Weston House" combined traditional exterior details with soaring interior spaces.

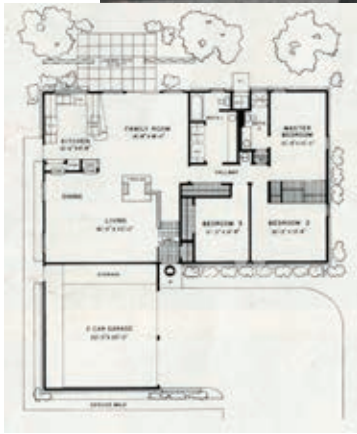
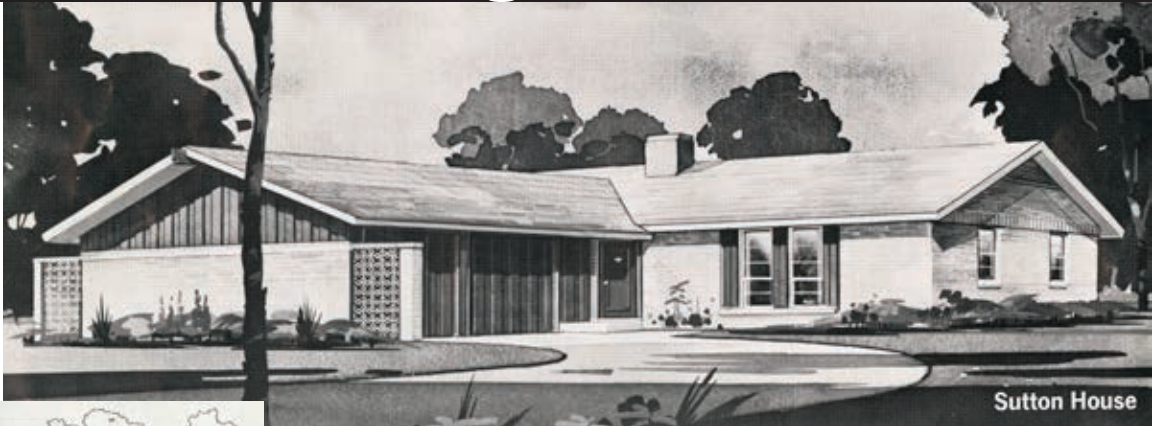
Nestled in the bluffs and prairie of northern Irving, the story of Northgate Homes began with the visionary leadership of Ben H. Carpenter, who would later create the office and retail park Las Colinas. In the mid-1950s, Carpenter formed the National Real Estate Development Corporation to develop his family's ranch land north of Highway 183 in Irving. Carpenter's development was adjacent to the University of Dallas, which opened in September of 1956 with 96 students.²¹

Northgate-I began construction the same year, with the first houses completed in a series of u-shaped streets bounded by Northgate Drive, O'Connor Road, and Rochelle Boulevard. Sev-

eral of the street names, Dartmouth, Vassar, and Bryn Mawr, were specifically chosen to heighten their allure.

Similar in approach to Fox & Jacobs, Northgate Homes were built within a master planned community that promoted convenient access to schools, shopping, and recreational facilities. Early marketing materials touted their desirability based on all of these things. At the top of the list—"Cultural values inherent with proximity to a University."²² The 100-bed Irving Community Hospital (now Baylor) was a long-standing amenity on the growing city's wish list. Completed in November 1964, it too, was situated within

Northgate Homes



blocks of the Northgate development on land donated by Ben Carpenter and Dan Williams.

The company quickly gained excellence awards from the National Association of Home Builders for a three-year period starting in 1960.

In July of 1961, *American Home Magazine* bestowed on Northgate Homes an honor similar to one it had given Fox & Jacobs, as one of the “Five Prize Winning Homes in the Southwest.”²³ The Weston House model was featured in the article as a hybrid blend of traditional exterior details and soaring spaces that defined the contemporary interior. Registered Texas architect Milton Barrick of Arlington designed the houses and developed exterior paint schemes so that each would have both cohesiveness and originality. Seven model homes were established in the 1100 and 1200 blocks of Northgate Drive; many of them still bear their original cladding, windows, and wood shutters.

According to a mortgage financing sheet, Northgate Homes offered 21 different models, ranging from 3 bedrooms and 1 ½ baths to 5 bed-

Arlington architect Milton Barrick designed houses for Northgate Homes, which constructed a master-planned community in Irving in the early 1960s. An elevation and floor plan for a “Sutton” model are pictured above.

rooms and 2 ½ baths, at prices starting at \$16,650 and escalating to \$23,000.²⁴ Again, there was a correlation not only with Fox & Jacobs’ pricing structure, but also the maturity of post-war housing developments in their strategy to build for a variety of income levels and gain market share. However, in the case of Northgate, dwellings of varying price points were built in adjacent neighborhoods creating an opportunity for multiple income levels to interact in close proximity. This winning mix has seen a recent resurgence by city planners in their efforts to revive urban cores with low, moderate, and high wage earners who dwell in lofts and townhomes.

Major construction in Northgate continued through 1964 with the completion of the Northgate West and Gateway Homes subdivisions between Carpenter Road (now MacArthur Boulevard) and Story Road. Meanwhile, additions to the original Northgate-I plat continued with “Northgate Heights” and the company’s high-end “Villa del Norte” neighborhood, which affords scenic views of the Las Colinas Country Club.



Flash Forward: A Mid-Century House Tour

For two years, I was fortunate to rent a “Sutton House” model situated in the Northgate West subdivision. At first glance, the structure’s somewhat bland curb appeal was heightened by a landmark tree that defined the front yard. A pair of pattern block wing walls, derived from the work of Edward Durrell Stone, flanked the garage and gave it some Mid-Century Modern character. Looking at the “builder beige” paint scheme and overgrown shrubbery, I wasn’t sold on the property until we stepped inside for the first time, where we were amazed by the dramatic vaulted ceiling and double-sided fireplace that created the central living area. Ash veneered built-ins and a snack bar off the open kitchen led to sliding patio doors which opened onto a cozy porch and terrace. The main bath had laundry hook-ups, double sinks, and a long Formica countertop, which was illuminated by a Japanese-inspired light box – nice touch! Three modestly sized bedrooms and a half bath with a pass-through linen closet completed the 1,600 square foot floor plan.

So how well did our “Mid-Century Modest” house stand up to the rigors of life in the 2010s?²⁵ Extremely well! The floor plan still worked for both small dinner parties and large groups. People often gathered in the spaces that radiated from the fireplace. Its raised hearth provided additional seating and it looked retro-cool without people, too. The original Cupples brand aluminum windows still functioned effortlessly, while the wide eaves kept the strong Texas sun at bay.

Unfortunately, the U-shaped kitchen was designed for one cook—not two. I had to remember that the house was built before working mothers, at a time when a stay-at-home wife was the sole captain of this ship. She did all of the cooking,

while her husband might step in periodically to grab a beverage out of the Frigidaire. The floor plan was specifically created for nourishing and entertaining children, while keeping an eye on them from the expansive kitchen window that overlooked the back yard. My partner and I often joked that we would buy the house and remodel the kitchen with those pricey Euro-sized refrigerator drawers, just to gain more counter space!

Still separated from the main living area with a hinged door, the hallway led to the quiet/non-public zone of bedrooms and utility spaces. The main bath performed flawlessly. Designed and installed fifty years ago, the vanity counter was still perfect for sorting and folding laundry. Louvered bi-fold doors hid the washer and dryer. At night, soft amber beams passed through them as the laundry pair rhythmically swished and whirred away at their chore. And although the master bath was miniscule, I always enjoyed the tiny window in the tiled shower that allowed for refreshing seasonal breezes. However our main storage area, located on raised concrete slabs in the garage, was a bit lacking. But when isn’t storage a problem for a museum professional who curates both day and night? Overall, we were lucky to find such a great home tucked inside an unsuspecting package.

I learned a lot from that house. My inner historic house curator had me wondering about original owners James and Virginia Deewall and their household furnishings when they stepped across the threshold fifty years before us.²⁶ They made the house work for them. How could we match that, or do better? My curiosity led to me to ponder the wisdom of author Sarah Susanka and her rallying cry in *The Not So Big House*,

while voraciously tearing through a vintage copy of Mary and Russel Wright's *Guide to Easier Living* (yes, the same Russel Wright of the "American Modern" dishware). Both authors, although separated by five decades, espoused the "less is more" approach to architecture, interior design, and storage spaces, based upon work flow studies. All this, under the guise of simplifying our everyday lives, seems to make even more sense in our rapidly evolving digital age. I always find the cyclical nature of history to be undeniably compelling. We don't want to go back and live there, but we can certainly learn from the past.

And how can we once again embrace these mid-century houses as worthy of research, recognition, and rebirth? Time will tell, but in my opinion ranch houses—from builders like Fox & Jacobs and Northgate Homes—have a bright future. Today's young homeowners are slowly discovering that their character-defining features, economy of operation, and quality building materials resonate with the way they want to live in the twenty-first century. For homeowners armed with a scalpel instead of sledgehammer and a mantra of conservation over destruction, these legions of "Flairs" and "Sutton Houses" might just be the next highly-sought housing option in Dallas. ■

Author's Note:

In order to maintain tangible links with the recent past, I encourage homeowners and historians to pass along written histories of their houses, and to donate photographs, plat maps, floor plans and marketing materials to local research facilities, where everyone has access to these invaluable treasures.

NOTES

¹Marlyn Schwartz, "Dave Fox: The man who brought you all those Fox and Jacobs homes," *Dallas Magazine*, March 1975, p. 22.

²Charles Matthews, "Why Does a Fox & Jacobs House Look That Way?" *D Magazine*, November 1978, p.131.

³Schwartz, "Dave Fox," p. 23.

⁴Elery Owens, "Young Men Going Places: Dave Fox Jr. and Ike Jacobs," *Dallas Magazine*, May 1958, p. 76.

⁵Advertisement for Fox & Jacobs in the "Marksmen" yearbook, St. Mark's School of Texas, 1962.

⁶Owens, "Young Men Going Places," p. 76

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 76.; Matthews, "Why Does a Fox & Jacobs House Look That Way?" p.174.

⁸Information taken from a 1958 Award of Merit certificate from *House and Home Magazine* and an undated scrapbook clipping from homeowners Sena and Seth Spofford of the Park Forest Community.

⁹Information taken from an unknown magazine source dated March 1959 in a scrapbook clipping from homeowners Sena and Seth Spofford of the Park Forest Community.

¹⁰Matthews, "Why Does a Fox & Jacobs House Look That Way?" p. 178.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹³"Lively's the Name," *Newsweek*, March 26, 1956, p. 84.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Barbara Miller Lane, Research Professor, Growth and Structure of Cities Department, Bryn Mawr College, posed a question about the relationship between architects Milam & Roper with Centex Homes in Elk Grove Village on a history blog posted on Michigan State University's H-Net website, March 8, 2013.

¹⁶"Centex's Johnston Park will offer Décor Homes," *The Dallas Morning News*, September 28, 1958, sect. 7, p. 5.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Statistical information from www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/centex-corporation-history/.

¹⁹Christine Rogers, "Ju-Nel Mid-Century Modern Houses," *D Home*, September 2006, p. 132.

²⁰The number of documented houses and neighborhoods was taken from www.ju-nelhomes.net/index.php website.

²¹Joseph Rice, *Irving: A Texas Odyssey* (Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, 1989), 79.

²²National Real Estate Development Corporation, sales brochure for Northgate Homes, 1963, p. 5 (source: Irving Archives).

²³"5 Prize Winning Homes in the Southwest," supplement inside *American Home Magazine*, July 1961, p. 74L-M.

²⁴Northgate Homes FHA 5 1/4% 30 Year Loan pricing sheet, September 1, 1962 (source: Irving Archives).

²⁵The term, "Mid-Century Modest" was coined in 2009 by Pam Kueber, the author and webmaster of www.RetroRenovation.com. Her point of view is that during the post-war period, only 1 million true Mid-Century Modern houses were built, while 29 million Mid-Century Modest houses were constructed for the mass market. Both are equally deserving of preservation and adaptive use.

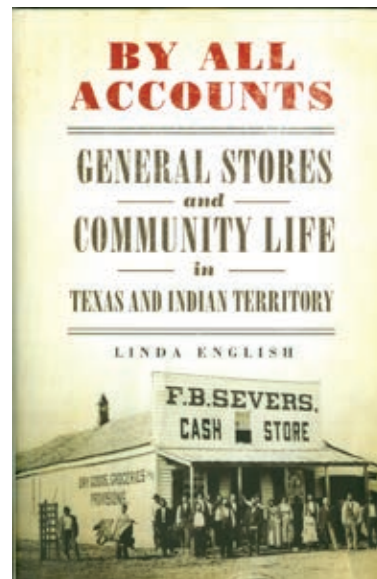
²⁶James H. and Virginia A. Deewall purchased 1312 Croydon Street on May 7, 1962, according to the original property deed cards on file at the Irving Archives.

Linda English, *By All Accounts: General Stores and Community Life in Texas and Indian Territory* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013, 268 pp., \$29.95)

In this book, English accomplishes something historians love to do—find lively, meaningful stories in historic documents. She researched sales ledgers from small-town general stores, and used that data to discover larger insights about the small southern and western towns, the role of general stores, and the nature of life in the north Texas and Oklahoma region in the 1870s and 1880s. This was no easy trick. At first glance, her primary source material was mostly endless lists of thread and flour, salt and calico, potatoes and coffee. This tedium was occasionally relieved by a luxurious expenditure such as canned lobster, or the scandalous purchase of two bottles of laudanum by a lady who came back for more ten days later. What proves to be rich source material could have been overlooked as mere shopping lists.

English carefully teases out greater insights from her material than the simple facts of repetitive diets and limited fashion choices. She explores commercial race relations in this region where the slaveholding south meets the wild west by noting whose names are honored with Mr., Mrs., or Miss, and whose are instead followed by parenthetical abbreviations for “colored” or “free woman of color.” The purchasing habits of married couples reveal much about the economic power within marriage. Where most wives charged under their breadwinning husband’s name, one doctor and his wife maintained separate accounts because she operated a business.

The general store records also yield information about the plight of sharecroppers, whose farm profits never quite satisfied their grocery debts. English explains how the store could be both attractive and frightening for ladies, filled with pretty goods, but also with idle men, drunk from the secret keg in the back room, who might insult their honor. Despite providing that secret keg, the storekeeper was a leading citizen, who supported local charities and gained



worldly knowledge through contacts with his national suppliers. He (for all but one in English’s storekeepers were male) also served as the major source of credit and controlled what types of commodities were available to local citizens. Operating a store in Indian Territory was similar to doing so in Texas, but it carried its own unique challenges, as did commerce in the German Hill Country.

By All Accounts is written in an accessible but slightly academic manner. English reviews all the previous work on general stores, perhaps more than the average reader would prefer. Still, she brings life to the customers and store owners buried in the ledgers and helps the reader feel how these people lived together in small towns where the store was a center of social life. The illustrations are few but good, and include one of Anna Martin, a German immigrant who became a store owner and bank president, looking matriarchal as she discusses business with her sons. The text is fully footnoted, and some of the other works mentioned, such as *The Southern Country Store* by Lewis Atherton, would be enjoyable further reading.

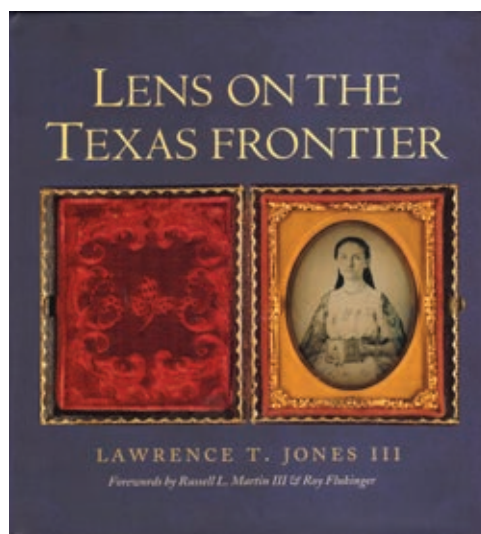
—Evelyn Montgomery
Dallas Heritage Village

Lawrence T. Jones III, *Lens on the Texas Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014, 224 pp., \$40.00)

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then the Jones collection contains over five million words on life in Texas. While the entire collection dates from 1846–1945, *Lens on the Texas Frontier* focuses on the early pioneer photographs of the nineteenth century. Lawrence T. Jones III started collecting early Texas photographs during the 1970s. His love of Texas history and photography spurred his passion for collecting. From 1970 until 2008, Jones amassed a collection of 5,000 images, which he then donated to the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University. A brief introductory chapter provides an excellent and succinct overview of the forms of early photography from daguerreotypes (1843), ambrotypes, and tintypes (1850s), to stereoscopic images and cabinet cards (1860s).

This collection is a rare assemblage of unique imagery depicting all walks of life. Pioneer Texas photographers chased history and set up shops where the action was happening. Though sometimes in danger, these men and women captured significant moments in history, including the war with Mexico, slavery, and the Civil War. These photographers went to the front lines to get a shot of the action. Not only does this work provide an unprecedented visual representation of Texas, the author's extensive research into the photographers themselves provides for interesting background information. The reader learns about the subjects of the photographs, the photographic processes used, and the photographers themselves, how they came to Texas and their previous locations, where they found work, and how they operated their businesses.

The majority of the images included in the book are portraits of various individuals, although there are also some views of Texas scenes, many found in the chapter on stereographs. Geographically, this collection of images spans



the entire state from Houston and San Antonio to McKinney. This work is an exquisite photographic history of Texas and contains within it countless subjects. We see Union and Confederate soldiers in the Civil War, Mexican citizens and military men, and everyday men, women, and children. *Lens on the Texas Frontier* depicts an array of Texas residents, African American, Native American, Hispanic, and Caucasian. Subjects in this rare collection include an image of Santa Anna (1855), a young slave boy, a public hanging (1866), and a cat wearing a serape.

Images included in this work represent historically significant, often previously unpublished views of Texas, and also the preferences and personal interests of the author and collector. This is only a small sampling of the thousands of images in the Lawrence T. Jones III collection housed at SMU. Thanks to grant funding, the entire collection is now digitally preserved and accessible online through DeGolyer's website. Everyone from the seventh grade Texas History student to the graduate history major, the scholar to the general history enthusiast will enjoy *Lens on the Texas Frontier*. It is not only strong in Texas history, but also in the history of photography in Texas.

—Samantha Dodd
Dallas Historical Society

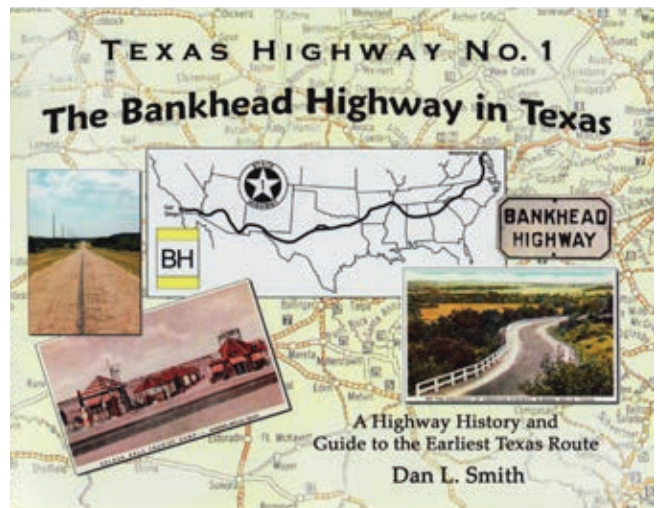
Dan L. Smith, *The Bankhead Highway in Texas* (Fort Worth: Bankhead Highway Publishing, 2013, 154 pp., \$30.00)

I owe Dan Smith an apology. When I heard about his new book on the Bankhead Highway, I was expecting one of those template-style, “photo-and-caption” history books that are so popular these days. This is so much more, a comprehensive, no-stone unturned, highly readable study of America’s first coast-to-coast highway to pass through the southern reaches of the country. Nine hundred miles of the route, nearly one third of the entire highway, passed through Texas. “Ask him the time, he tells you how a clock works.” In this case we also learn who invented the clock, how the parts were made, where should the clock go — you get the idea. If there is anything you want to know about the building of the Bankhead Highway, it’s here.

In 1900, early interest in improved roads was not for the automobile, but for the bicycle, which was a craze of the time. Did you ever try to ride your bike in deep mud or sand? The Good Roads Movement therefore predates Henry Ford’s 1903 assembly line, but affordable Model Ts insured America’s preoccupation with the car would support better highways.

Alabama native John Asa Rountree had already organized the United States Good Roads Association when Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, also known as the Bankhead Bill, for Alabama Senator John Hollis Bankhead. The new bill inspired Rountree to create the Bankhead National Highway Association to spur development of a cross-country highway that would be routed through the southern states.

All-weather roads served military purposes, improved postal service, and commerce. A farmer seeking higher return on his produce would have the ability to easily move those goods to another county if a better price could be had. Towns along the route would reap benefits from the cafes, motels, and service stations which



would be built to accommodate drivers. Crews called “Pathfinders” were sent by the Bankhead association to visit towns and cities along the potential route and evaluate them. If one city was unenthusiastic, an alternative could be found.

Smith’s book contains 64 pages of photos and Texas county maps. The volume’s spiral binding makes it driver-friendly and easy to handle. Going east to west across Texas, maps are accompanied by photos, newspaper clippings, postcards, and excerpts from the 1921 “Authentic Roadmap and Tourist Guide of the Bankhead Highway, Washington to San Diego.”

Smith covered hundreds of miles and spent countless hours putting together this compelling story of the Bankhead Highway. His efforts are a fitting tribute to the work required to accomplish construction on such a vast scale in the early twentieth century. I am anxious to jump in my pickup with this book and explore the Bankhead Highway. I thank Dan Smith for putting all this important research together in such a useful way, and am sorry if I ever thought it would be anything less.

—Bob Dunn

David Hale Smith, ed., *Dallas Noir* (New York: Akashic Books, 2013, 283 pp., \$15.95)

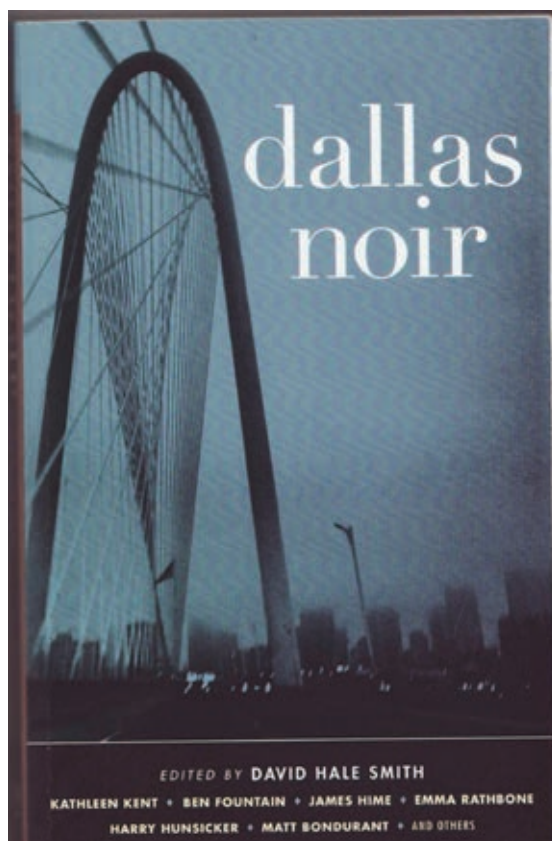
Editor's Note: Dallas Noir is a work of fiction rather than history, but the stories are intended to convey the places and people of Dallas. Legacies readers may enjoy searching these stories for local landmarks and for myths and truths about the city's inhabitants.

If there are truly fifty shades of gray then there are surely fifty shades of noir. *Dallas Noir* clearly illustrates the full range of this genre. Cleverly sorted into Cowboys, Rangers, and Mavericks, this colorful collection offers sixteen shades of dark tales, each in a familiar Dallas location.

Dallasites will be familiar with the settings and probably recognize many of the characters—from predatory realtors to over-worked and over-sexed wait staff. The landmarks include the Texas Theater, Fair Park's Texas Star Ferris wheel, and White Rock Lake (with a description as dark as the stories). There are tales of mansions in Park Cities and shacks in Pleasant Grove. Settings vary from suburban Plano to rural Cleburne, from up-town condos to M Street cottages.

Readers are taken on a virtual tour of the seamy underbelly of this Megaplex. The “noirness” of these tales also varies from lightly, comically shady to brutally, murderously dark. Harry Hunsicker's “The Stick-up Girl” delivers a dark and sexy tale of the great-great-grandniece of Bonnie Parker of Bonnie and Clyde fame. She carries on the family tradition but with a surprise ending worthy of O. Henry. “The Realtor” by Ben Fountain features another, and in many ways, scarier, female predator—an upscale Dallas realtor. This is a sexy noir tale of a player getting out-played.

For a twist with a Latina flavor, I enjoyed Catherine Quellar's “Dog Sitter.” This engrossing slice-of-life story was unsettling and all too believable. Lauren Davis also taps the Hispanic roots of noir by skillfully entwining Uptown and Oak



Cliff with drug deals and Mexican folklore in her dark offering “Full Moon.” Kathleen Kent's “Coincidences Can Kill You” takes readers on a wild ride of the crime noir kind, when Civil War re-enactors battle a well-armed drug gang using antique weapons.

“Swingers Anonymous” introduces us to Jonathan Wood's hapless antihero who accidentally finds nirvana after trying a disastrous chemical experiment with sex and drugs. The tightly twisted murder mystery “In the Air” by Daniel J. Hale takes readers on a convoluted trail from Deep Ellum to Highland Park and back to Fair Park at a pace as dizzying as the Texas State Fair's featured Texas Star.

—Gene Helmick-Richardson



DALLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
"Remembering Dallas' past builds her future"



The Hall of State

The Hall of State, designed by Donald Bartheleme, was built in 1936 as the centerpiece of the Texas Centennial Exposition. This building honors the heroes from the history of the nation and state of Texas. It is the eastern terminus of the great Esplanade and is renowned for its Art Deco styling and stunning interior.

Historic City Tours

Take a ride through history and join the DHS on one of its Historic City Tours. You'll learn little known facts and view familiar locations in a different way after enjoying these entertaining tours. Discovering Dallas Historic Neighborhoods and Running with Bonnie and Clyde are just two of the many historic tours offered year round by the DHS.



Brown Bag Lunch Series

The DHS Brown Bag Lunch Series is held in the historic Hall of State in Fair Park. Historic topics such as The History of Fair Park and Wild Women of the West are a couple of past lecture subjects.

For more information concerning tours, lectures, special events, renting the

Hall of State or memberships, please visit

www.dallashistory.org or call 214.421.4500

DHS is sponsored in part by the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs.

PHOTO CREDITS

Kerry Adams: pp. 49 and 51

Dallas Historical Society: pp. 13 and 14

The Dallas Morning News: p. 44 (left)

Dallas Municipal Archives: p. 61

DeGolyer Library, SMU: front cover

Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, Special Collections,
The University of Texas at Arlington, Library, Arlington, Texas: p. 17

Indiana University Archives (P0046851): p. 19

Irving Public Library Archives: p. 53.

Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture, Courtesy Centex: p. 48 (right)

Mark Rice: pp. 25, 26, 64, and back cover

St. Mark's School of Texas: pp. 44–45 (center)

Sena and Seth Spofford, Park Forest Neighborhood Association: p. 47

David Exall Stewart: pp. 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9

Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division,
Dallas Public Library: pp. 2, 16, 29, 32, 35, 36, 45, 46, 48 (left), and 52

White Rock Home Tour, 2006: p. 50

Save the Date

Park Cities Historic and Preservation Society Home Tour *Saturday, April 11, 2015, from 10 am. – 3 pm.*

**2015 Home Tour will feature important and
architecturally interesting homes of the Park Cities.**

- The Funds raised from the Home Tour will be used to further the mission of preserving the historic, architectural, cultural and aesthetic legacy of the Park Cities.
- The Society landmarks architecturally and historically significant properties in the Park Cities.
- Members enjoy historic and preservation oriented educational programs.
- For further information please call **(214) 528-0021** or contact **info@pchps.org** or visit the website **www.pchps.org**



16TH ANNUAL LEGACIES

DALLAS HISTORY CONFERENCE

Conflicts That Shaped Dallas

Saturday, January 31, 2015
Hall of State in Fair Park.

Registration: 8:00 AM

Conference: 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Sponsors of the 16th Annual Legacies Dallas History Conference*

Dallas Center for Architecture
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Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park
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Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture
Park Cities Historic and Preservation Society
Preservation Dallas
The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division,
Dallas Public Library
Texas State Historical Association
William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies at SMU

*As of September 25, 2014

Conference Presentations

Mark Doty,
*“Saving St. Ann’s School—Historic Preservation
in the City of Dallas”*

Stephen Fagin
*“History in Conflict: Kennedy Assassination
Memorialization in Dallas, 1964-1989”*

Robert B. Fairbanks,
*“The Great Divide: The Politics of Space
and the First Trinity River Controversy”*

Drew Whatley
“The Attempted Annexation of the Park Cities”

Special Feature

“Conversation with a History Maker: Wes Wise,”
conducted by Darwin Payne

Morning refreshments will be included in the registration fee of \$35. Patrons (\$100) will be invited to a reception with the speakers the evening before the conference. Registration forms will be mailed in December 2014. For more information, please contact Conference Coordinator Michael V. Hazel at 214-413-3665, or email: mvhazel@sbcglobal.net.

CONTRIBUTORS



Kerry Adams is the Curator and Exhibits Director for the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History and Culture, where he has worked for two years. His prior work experience was as Collections Manager at Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park. His article is based on research conducted for an exhibit at Old Red which ran from November 2013 through August 2014, entitled “Dream No Small Dreams: How Erik Jonsson Led Dallas from Tragedy to Triumph in the 1960s.” His other research focuses on the history of Dallas manufacturing, the World War II homefront, domestic life, and architectural history with a special emphasis on the post-war period. He earned an M.S. in Historic Preservation and Museum Studies from Eastern Michigan University.



Elizabeth York Enstam earned her Ph.D. from Duke. She has taught at several Dallas area universities and has published widely, especially in the field of women’s history. In 1982 she edited *When Dallas Became a City: Letters of John Milton McCoy, 1870-1881* for the Dallas Historical Society. Her book *Women and the Creation of Urban Life: Dallas, Texas, 1843-1920*, won both the Tullis and Carpenter awards from the Texas State Historical Association as the best book published in 1998, as well as the Fehrenbach Award from the Texas Historical Commission, and was listed as a finalist by the Texas Institute of Letters. She is a member of the *Legacies* Editorial Advisory Board.



Erica Johnson earned her M.A. from the University of Texas at Arlington and her Ph.D. at Florida State University. She is an assistant professor of history at Gordon State College in Georgia. She is currently revising her dissertation on abolitionists in Saint-Domingue for publication as a monograph.



Mark Rice grew up in Dallas where he often accompanied his court reporter father on trips to his downtown offices in the Kirby and Gulf States buildings. The historic structures and rich history that he encountered planted a seed that stayed with Mark long afterward. After graduating from UTA with a degree in history, Mark entered the business world but never lost his fascination with the past, particularly the streets, structures and larger-than-life personalities that defined the growth and success of Dallas. A frequent contributor to *Legacies*, his most recent article was “Dallas: City of Industry,” in the spring 2013 issue. He is also the editor of *Legacies*’ “Dallas Then & Now” series.

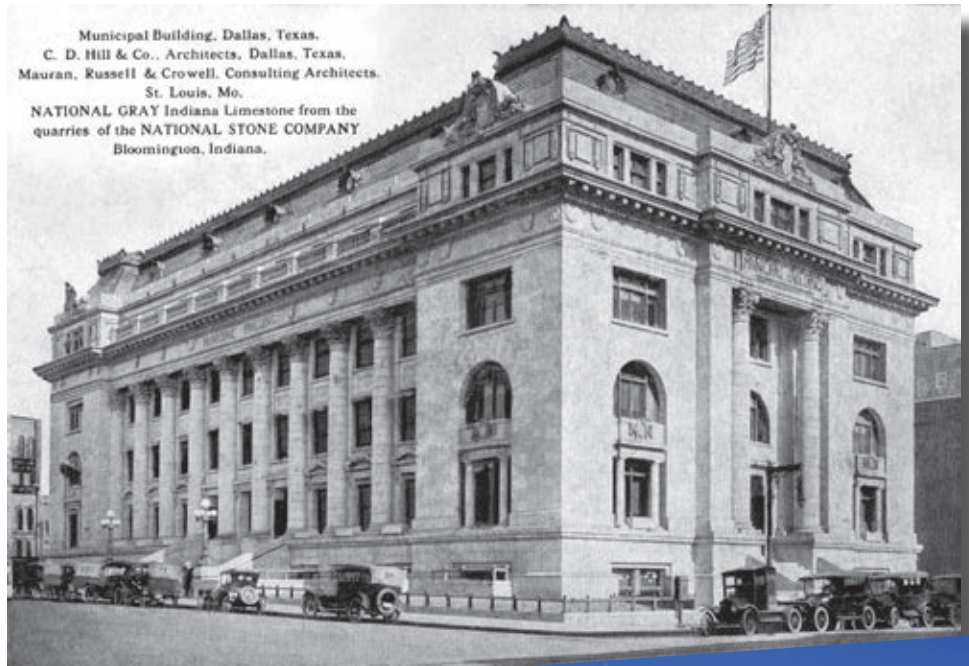


A great-grandson of Col. Exall, **David Exall Stewart** is a free-lance writer, editor, and designer of publications and web sites through his company Yardstick Communications, Dallas. He is also a partner in Lakeside DFW, a 150-acre mixed-use project currently under development in Flower Mound. A street there is named in Exall’s honor.

Book Reviewers

Samantha Dodd is the archivist for the Dallas Historical Society. She holds both Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in History as well as a Master’s in Library and Information Science. She is nationally certified by the Academy of Certified Archivists. . . . **Bob Dunn** of Garland is a native Texan whose passion is collecting information about the state and its unique people, past and present. During regular travels through the state, he amassed a large and varied private library of Texana, now available to the public as the Lone Star Library in Stephenville. He is an active supporter and docent of the Garland Landmark Society. . . . Historian and professional storyteller **Gene Helmick-Richardson** wears many hats: floppy sun hat as the agricultural educator at Dallas Heritage Village, a cowboy hat when he serves on the board of the Will Roger’s Medallion Award Committee for western writing, and a panama when on stage sharing tales as part of Twice Upon a Time Storytellers. . . . **Evelyn Montgomery** is the Director of Collections, Exhibits and Preservation for Dallas Heritage Village as well as Book Review editor for *Legacies*.

Dallas THEN & NOW



When wealthy St. Louis brewer Adolphus Busch agreed in 1910 to create his ornate Adolphus Hotel in Dallas, he asked for great latitude in site selection. Busch's request dovetailed perfectly with the city's desire to replace the impressive but badly overcrowded 1889 City Hall on the prime corner of Commerce and Akard Streets. Razing of the old building soon got underway after city workers were moved into equally crowded temporary quarters. Architect C.D. Hill was chosen to design the new Municipal Building across town at Main and Harwood. Hill responded with a stately, Neoclassical gem dressed in Indiana limestone, terra cotta and green slate. The new building opened in October 1914, on the first day of the State Fair. All city departments were housed in the new facility. City police were headquartered in the basement, while a maximum-security jail located on the top floor became known as "High Five." The jail would hold both Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby in future years. Further growth caused the 1914 Municipal Building to be supplanted as the primary city hall in 1956, when a new structure was completed on the building's east side. The police continued to use the old building for many years, and it still houses city courts. The University of North Texas has announced plans to eventually renovate the building for its Law School.

—Mark Rice



