Fall
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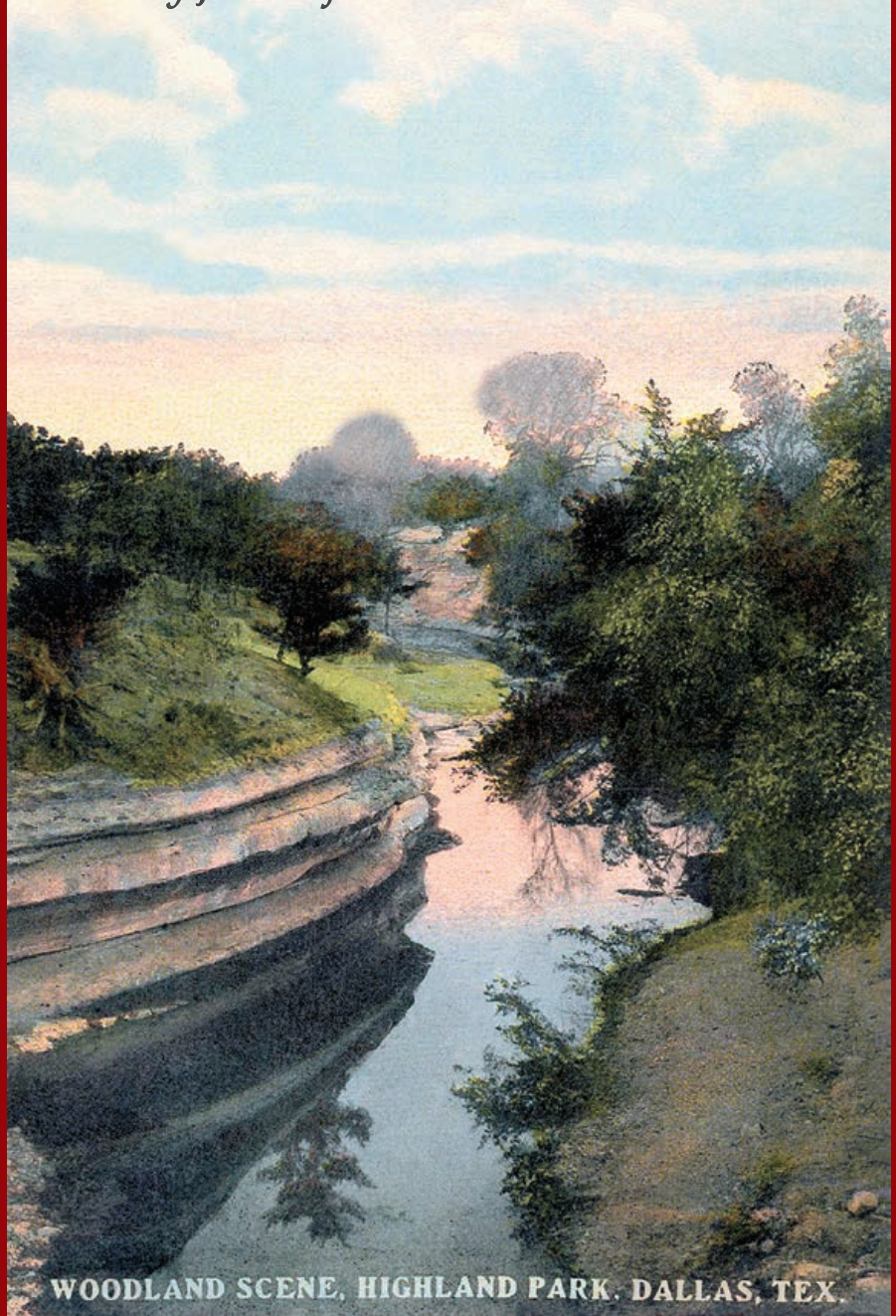
LEGACIES

A History Journal for Dallas & North Central Texas

Conflict and Resolution

Attempts to Annex the Park Cities
Saving St. Ann's School: Historic Preservation in the City of Dallas
History in Conflict: Kennedy Assassination Memorialization in Dallas, 1963-1989
The Infidels of Denison
Recording Memories: A Recently Discovered Treasure



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Front cover
Entitled "Woodland Scene, Highland Park," this postcard is typical of the promotional material produced in the 1910s and '20s emphasizing the natural beauty of the small municipality north of Dallas. Determined to preserve the town's special assets, residents fought efforts to annex it into the larger neighbor. See "Attempts To Annex the Park Cities," beginning on p. 4.

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Designed by prominent Dallas architects Otto Lang and Frank Witchell, Highland Park's town hall opened in 1924. Artist Guy Cahoon drew this sketch of the Spanish Mediterranean-style building, which still serves the community. See "Attempts To Annex the Park Cities," beginning on page 4.

Although "the Dallas way" has often been to avoid conflicts, disagreements—sometimes loud and prolonged—have actually been central to the growth and development of the city. Debates over the form of city government (commission vs. city manager, single-member districts, etc.); civil rights; expansion of the highway system; development of the Trinity River corridor; liquor by the drink; the status of Love Field; the preservation of historic neighborhoods—these and many more conflicts (and their resolutions) helped shape the city.

As Dallas expanded in the early twentieth century, becoming a regional center for banking, finance, transportation, publishing, and other businesses, the existence of independent, incorporated communities on its borders appeared to some as barriers to growth. Some of these small towns were quietly absorbed into the larger city. But attempts to annex affluent Highland Park and University Park to the north met with strong resistance. On at least three occasions between 1918 and 1945, Dallas mounted annexation campaigns. And each time, Park Cities residents resisted successfully. Eventually, Dallas surrounded the two municipalities, continuing its growth to the north. Drew Whatley chronicles the conflicts in his article.

Growth of a city can also threaten older neighborhoods and structures. A good example in Dallas is the area just north of downtown once known as "Little Mexico." In the last decades of the twentieth century, urban renewal rapidly replaced the frame homes and brick commercial structures with glass and steel high-rises. Left behind was St. Ann's School, which had educated generations of students living in the surrounding community. Mark Doty recounts the conflict between those wishing to preserve the structure and an owner anxious to maximize a suddenly valuable financial asset. In this case a far-sighted developer provided a resolution by purchasing the property, constructing a modern high-rise on part of it, and renovating the school building to new and very popular uses. The campaign to save St. Ann's School provided one of the first historic preservation successes in Dallas.

The former Little Mexico neighborhood is less than a mile from Dealey Plaza, the site of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. How to memorialize that tragedy led to heated debate and numerous conflicts over the next two decades, as the city grappled with a variety of proposed responses. Stephen Fagin describes several early ventures, ranging from educational to commercial, sincere to sensational, and mostly forgotten today. Ultimately, of course, the opening of The Sixth Floor Museum in 1989 provided a scholarly researched, professionally designed site in which visitors can learn about the assassination and the era. But achieving that resolution was one of the most difficult journeys in the city's history.

Religious beliefs have also been a source of conflict in nearly every community at one time or another. Three years ago, in the fall 2012 issue, Steven Butler wrote about a group of "freethinkers"—people who rejected organized religion—in Dallas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this issue, he turns his attention to a similar group in Denison, seventy-five miles north. Here the "infidels," as they called themselves, included prominent citizens such as Thomas Munson, famous for saving the French wine industry by providing plants from his vineyards; B. C. Murray, publisher of a local newspaper; and Charles Jones, a leading merchant. Today the names of Munson and Jones live on in a museum and library. But organized religion remains strong in Denison. In this case, resolution seems to have come in the form of forgetfulness.

In addition to these four stories of conflict and resolution, we offer a glimpse into a recently discovered local history artifact, a guest log kept in the John Neely Bryan cabin from March 1936, shortly after the cabin's reconstruction near the Old Red Courthouse, until 1943, when all the pages were filled. During that time thousands of visitors stepped into the cabin and signed the book, often adding information about their family's own history in Dallas County. Kerry Adams, curator at the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History and Culture, where the guest log now resides, offers a look at this fascinating relic.

Conflict and resolution are important elements of our legacy, things to be studied, considered, and when appropriate, emulated. —***Michael V. Hazel***

Attempts To Annex the Park Cities

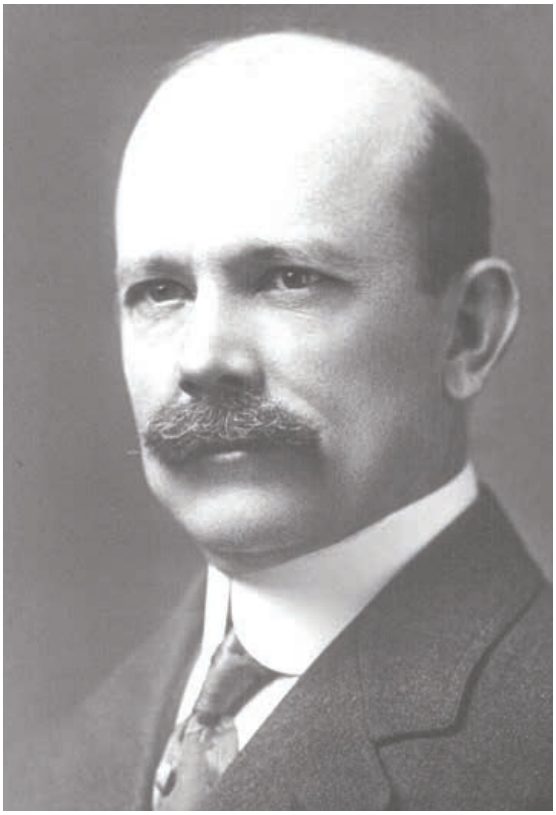
BY DREW WHATLEY

"A **house divided** against itself cannot stand," but it can apparently grow into one of the largest metropolitan areas in the United States. Dallas-Fort Worth has myriad divisions: counties and cities, east and west, cowboys and cosmopolitan. One of the most unusual is the two tiny incorporated communities set in the middle of the hustle and bustle of Dallas. These small oases are aptly called the Park Cities, and these twin sisters grew up in the shadow of Dallas. The argument about their independence soured relations between them and the city of Dallas for decades.

Highland Park and University Park were both founded with an eye toward eventual integration with the city of Dallas. Highland Park was first, with its initial design and development beginning in 1906 and incorporation as a town in 1913. University Park grew along with Southern Methodist University, which was founded in 1911, and it was incorporated in 1924. Designed by Wilbur David Cook, who also planned Beverly Hills, California, Highland Park was promoted as a suburban town for the businessmen of Dallas, while University Park provided homes for SMU faculty and staff as well as other middle-class families. It was widely assumed that the Park Cities would eventually be integrated into Dallas. A common misconception, however, is that Highland Park asked Dallas for annexation before it incorporated in 1913.[1] The story goes that Dallas didn't want to pay the costs to connect Highland Park utilities and so it declined. But a careful search through Dallas City Council minutes and newspapers has failed to document this tale, which must be dismissed as apocryphal.[2] Even so, the developers of Highland Park expected eventual annexation, and former Dallas mayor W.M. Holland went on the record in 1917 claiming that it wasn't "a question of whether Highland Park wants to add itself to the city . . . it is a question as to what method."[3] That arrogance would later be shown to have been unwarranted.

The first feelers by the city of Dallas regarding annexation came a scant four years after the incorporation of Highland Park. In early 1917, a Chamber of Commerce employee was charged with investigating steps toward annexation and meeting with Highland Park representatives towards that goal.[4] Many of these early merger proposals

Former Dallas Mayor William M. Holland predicted in 1917 that Highland Park would eventually be added to Dallas.



Highland Park Mayor Perry Claiborne resisted attempts by Dallas in 1918 to annex his community.

took their impetus from the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, perhaps because a large number of the Chamber members lived in Highland Park while their business interests were in Dallas. Regardless, some progress was being made when the city of Dallas finished its new sewage disposal plant and a tax for its construction was sent without prior discussion to those it serviced, including Highland Park residents.[5] Public outcry rose in Highland Park, and in the words of Highland Park mayor Perry Claiborne, "this apparent animosity and domineering attitude . . . of Dallas certainly will not lessen the opposition to any form or basis of annexation."[6] The mayor's office in Highland Park eventually paid the taxes, but the conflict boded poorly for the annexation argument to come.

The following March the first attempt to annex Highland Park began in earnest, sparking off a struggle that would last through much of the year. On March 1, 1918, the Dallas City Council accepted an ordinance calling for elections regarding a number of proposed charter amendments, one of which was the annexation of Highland Park.[7] The Dallas City Attorney also ruled that Dallas could annex Highland Park unilaterally without the consent of Highland Park citizens, citing a similar case in Houston.[8] In response, Mayor Claiborne went on record saying that Highland Park would file an injunction if such actions were taken, while the Dallas mayor, Joe Lawther, suggested a concurrent Highland Park election on the issue. At a Highland Park town meeting, the proposal for an annexation plebiscite was rejected, with both the Mayor and City Secretary in clear opposition.[9] Regardless of the opinion of Highland Park, however, the voters of Dallas duly approved

Dallas Mayor Joe E. Lawther eventually dropped attempts by his city to annex Highland Park in 1918.

the annexation measure on April 2, 1918.[10]

Dallas voters may have voted in favor of annexation, but there was a long road to actual implementation. After the vote, Mayor Lawther refused to go on record with any concrete plans to enforce the annexation and stressed that "a great deal of harm can be done by arousing and cultivating an antagonism between the residents of Highland Park and Dallas."[11] The onus then fell on Highland Park, as the wait for a petition from the people of Highland Park for a vote began. An open letter to the people of Highland Park by anti-annexationists demonstrated how strong the opposition was. In short, this letter stated, "we are unalterably opposed to forcible annexation, and we are opposed to any negotiations . . . until Dallas shall have conceded that her attempt to annex us against our will is unlawful and void."[12] This statement did not please Mayor Lawther, who emphasized that his administration put the issue on the ballot at the request of the Chamber of Commerce. Ever since then he had been pursuing an amicable unification effort and had delayed enforcement, but if no negotiation could be reached, he had no choice but to comply with the will of the people. As summer turned to autumn, Highland Park remained in limbo. Eventually even Mayor Lawther lost patience, and finally an ordinance to annex Highland Park was drawn up and passed by the City Council on October 2.[13]

Shortly after the Dallas City Council formally passed the ordinance, an injunction was filed to prevent its implementation, and the legal battle was on. Dallas, as a city of over 5,000 people, had Home-Rule powers, essentially giving it all power not explicitly provided to the state in the Texas State Constitution. That includes the power to unilaterally annex adjoining territory.[14] Highland Park argued that because the Texas State Constitution doesn't explicitly give cities the power to annex territory, this move was unconstitutional. On November 24, Mayor Lawther issued a statement explaining that the city of Dallas would submit a plea of no contest in the injunction suit and let the matter drop. He explained that he brought this issue to a vote on the advice of the Chamber of Commerce, but when the initial outcry happened, it was too far along to cancel. After the vote passed, he had to pursue annexation until it was legally blocked so Dallas and Highland Park wouldn't have a legally unsettled relationship. He restated his desire for unification in the future, but for now, Highland Park and Dallas would stay separate.

So what actually happened? In his final statement, Mayor Lawther maintained that "our actions in annexing Highland Park could not be sustained in the courts in event of a contest."[15] But that is selling Dallas's case somewhat short. The devolution of powers to cities with the Home-Rule Act was extreme, and because the population of

Highland Park at this time was below 5,000, it was vulnerable to being exploited by Home Rule provisions. At the same time, some of the Dallas arguments were disingenuous. The Houston example cited by the Dallas City Attorney involved Houston consolidating with Houston Heights via mutual elections approving the merger, not unilateral action undertaken by Houston.[16] Mayor Lawther may have realized that even if the case was winnable, the power behind the anti-annexationists would have made the legal case long and ugly. Similarly, Mayor Lawther maintained throughout that he wished for unification to be mutually agreeable, and when he saw that was impossible he may have seen this as a way out. It seems certain that a majority of Highland Park residents were actually against annexation, as the most significant petition of residents for annexation reached only sixty signatures. In any case, failure to fully resolve the issue left an open wound that would not soon heal.

Shortly after the annexation campaign was defeated, Highland Park began annexing territory itself, expanding at a rapid rate with the development of Highland Park West and embracing the idea of itself as an independent municipality.[17] Nearly doubling in size, it also built a new community center and town hall. Most notably, Highland Park also began developing one of the nation's first suburban shopping centers, Highland Park Village, toward the end of the 1920s. Finally, Highland Park also bandied about the idea of annexing University Park in 1926, although nothing ever came of that plan.[18] However, the Park Cities began to grow closer together due to their common utility and school districts.[19]

While Highland Park was asserting its independence, Dallas was certainly not sitting on its hands. The Roaring Twenties were a time of tremendous growth in Dallas, and as the city grew, calls for the annexation of the Park Cities grew as well. Desultory attempts at annexation continued through the 1920s, with particular emphasis on increasing Dallas's population figures for censuses taken in 1920 and 1930.[20] Another idea that arose at this time was including the Park Cities with Dallas in a borough system similar to New York City.[21] This system would have left the Park Cities control over their school district, police departments, and other services while still adding their population figures to those of Dallas. These efforts lacked the concentration and political clout of the 1918 attempt, but they kept both the idea of annexation and the opposition towards it alive, as the next big push loomed on the horizon.

In 1932 the second concentrated attempt to annex Highland Park began. In October a representative for the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, Edward Moore, announced that a charter amendment annexing Highland Park would be placed on the ballot.[22] At the same time, petitions calling for an annexation plebiscite in Highland Park would be circulated. These petitions, due to low voter turnout in Highland Park elections, would only need forty or so signatures to force a vote.[23] These petitions elicited reactions from both sides, with many of the leaders against annexation in 1918 speaking out against this new sally. Ironically, the anti-annexationists would find their best ammunition in the recent changes to Dallas city government.

The charter amendments adopting the council-manager form of government in Dallas theoretically provided a perfect roadblock to annexation. In October 1930, Dallas voted to change to a council-manager form of local government, and this change took place in May 1931. The problem was that the state constitution proscribes modifying city charters until a two-year period has elapsed. Since a merger election would enact these charter amendments immediately, in the view of the anti-annexationists such as election would be unconstitutional until May 1933.[24] As was usual in these squabbles, the Dallas City Attorney took the opposite view, claiming that the charter was amended after the voting, rather than after the enactment, making an election in December 1932 acceptable. Regardless of legal questions, the petitions were presented to Highland Park on October 25, 1932, with a call for an election in December.

With the petitions presented, both annexationists and anti-annexationists began to rally

In 1945 University Park Mayor A. C. Slaughter supported the campaign to annex the Park Cities into Dallas. His position eventually cost him his office.

their forces. The leader of the annexation committee, Edward Moore, derided the charges of election illegality as "utterly ridiculous," and the Dallas City Attorney even issued a statement describing at length why the annexation would be legal.[25] At the same time, D. A. Frank, chairman of the Highland Park Citizen's Association, began to lead the charge against annexation, calling for a mass meeting of voters against the measure. Meanwhile, Highland Park dithered, verifying the names on the petitions to stall for time before being forced to call an election. In Highland Park, the City Attorney insinuated that Dallas leaders had ulterior motives, and that any special benefits promised to Highland Park, such as its exclusive school system or a set number of Dallas board members, would be untenable in the long term.[26] On the other hand, Mr. Askew of the annexation committee accused Highland Park of being "afraid to let the residents of the town vote on the proposition." He went on to claim, "the City Attorney there seems to be of the opinion that it is up to him to decide the issue."[27] Finally, mere days before Highland Park would be forced to put forth an election, a major meeting of anti-annexationists was called. The 450-strong group issued an opinion professing faith in their City Attorney and calling for no vote to be held until May 1933. At this point, *The Dallas Morning News*, always a trumpeter of Dallas expansion, issued a pessimistic editorial arguing that "a little longer courtship is in order."[28]

Considering the storm of controversy brewed up in such a short time, the merger attempt would actually end very quietly. In a secret meeting held on November 7, the Highland Park Town Council voted unanimously to prevent any annexation election until May 1933.[29] The Council had been expected to consider the election in a public meeting the following day, but instead presented the annexation committee with a fait accompli. As in 1918, negotiations began for a later vote but these died on the vine. Once again, a legal loophole prevented a plebiscite on annexation, and like the last time, annexationist vigor subsided for a few years.

While most of the nation suffered through the Great Depression, Dallas grew rapidly. Dallas's greatest achievement during this period was the Texas Centennial Exposition, which facilitated the expansion and re-construction of Fair Park and put Dallas on the national map. Following the success of the Exposition, and in the later stages of World War II, Dallas started planning for the post-war future. The result of these efforts was the Dallas Master Plan. As a first step, the Plan pushed for the annexation of the Park Cities, nominally to reduce red tape during infrastructure projects and bring Dallas together as a whole. The last major push for annexation would be inextricably tied to the Greater Dallas Master Plan.

Word of the Master Plan had been leaking out for a few months before its official debut on March 1, 1945. In late December 1944, newspa-

pers began to run opinions and political cartoons referencing it, and groups for and against annexation began to coalesce in January 1945.[30] By February, anti-annexation groups began running ads opposing a plan that had not yet been presented to the public, and the Greater Dallas Citizen's Committee, sponsor of the plan, was reduced to putting out counter advertisements begging citizens to reserve judgment. Finally, on March 1 at the "D-Day" gala in Dallas, the Greater Dallas Master Plan, advocating new roads, beautification projects, infrastructure projects, and the annexation of Highland Park, University Park, and Preston Hollow, was presented to the public.[31] The date for voting on the merger was set for April 3, 1945. The Park Cities, lacking any legal recourse, acceded to the date and set elections for the same day.[32] For the first time, annexation would be put to a vote in both cities.

The setting of a vote pushed this annexation campaign into high gear, with constant articles, acrimonious debates, and incessant advertisements. With two official groups, the Park Cities Anti-Annexation Association and the Greater Dallas Citizen's Committee (G.D.C.C.), pushing their respective platforms, the extent of the debate dwarfed the previous merger campaigns. This campaign actually had many hallmarks of modern political advertisements, with catchy slogans, negative campaigning, and blatant flag waving. The Great Dallas Master Plan quickly became "the Plan to Master"[33] for anti-annexationists, while according to the G.D.C.C., people should "Vote for the Boys Over There! Vote for Unification!"[34] The propaganda developed nationally to support the war effort came to be applied to the fight about annexation, and comparisons with the war were sometimes taken to the extreme, for example when a Park Cities resident "likened the unification plan to those of Adolf Hitler with his master plan for a master race" in a town hall discussion.[35] Regardless of how heated the debate became, leading up to the election the pro-annexation camp seemed stronger than it had been ever before.

The pro-merger group achieved some large successes during the campaign. Previous merger attempts had been pushed primarily by Dallas residents, while the 1945 attempt had a much stronger contingent of Park Cities residents. The G.D.C.C. itself claimed that 76 percent of its members were Park Cities residents.[36] Pro-annexation speakers included a former Highland Park city finance commissioner, former Highland Park city councilmen, and even members of the Highland Park Chamber of Commerce.[37] The biggest inroads were in University Park, however, where a significant segment of the sitting city government supported unification, including the city commissioners and the mayor himself, A. L. Slaughter.[38] Anti-annexationists were particularly offended by Mayor Slaughter's pro-merger position and would make him regret it in future elections.

Meanwhile, the anti-annexationists mobilized considerable resources to put doubt in the minds of citizens that Dallas was acting in full faith. The opposition hammered on the same issues brought up in previous annexation attempts such as zoning control, taxes, schools, and public services such as fire protection and water. Any pro-business zoning ruling in Dallas became "one of the most flagrant violations of zoning regulations in the history of zoning annals,"[39] while guarantees issued by Dallas regarding schools and fire protection were waved away as "unenforceable promises."[40] Unsubstantiated fears of Dallas cutting off the Park Cities water supply were stoked by the anti-annexation community to increase voter antipathy towards Dallas, and half-truths were common. One flyer mentioned claims that "in 1924 the residents around S.M.U. pleaded for admission to Dallas. They were spurned. It would have cost Dallas money."[41] What it failed to mention was that, at the same time, Highland Park considered annexing the territory and declined for the same reason. By no means was chicanery exclusive to the anti-annexationists, however. As usual, the Dallas press fell right in line with the G.D.C.C. and published nearly exclusively pro-annexation articles. Thankfully, the short period between the announcement of the Master Plan and the voting date meant that the campaign was quickly coming to a close.

Both sides were exceedingly confident before

Dallas Mayor Woodall Rodgers headed the list of Dallas officials campaigning to annex the Park Cities and Preston Hollow into Dallas in 1945.

the election, even while making their final pitches to the voters. In the newspapers, constant choruses of pro-annexation Park Cities residents were heard, while the leadership of Dallas published one final guarantee signed by everyone from Mayor Woodall Rodgers down. During the final days before balloting, huge lists of pro-merger residents were printed in the papers to encourage others to side with them. On election day, pictures of Mayor Slaughter and Mayor Rodgers voting for unification ran in the papers. Meanwhile, the anti-annexationists remained quietly confident that they would emerge victorious. As the votes were tallied the night of April 3 1945, it became clear that the Park Cities would remain independent.

The measure for annexation was defeated in both Park Cities, although Preston Hollow to the north voted overwhelmingly to join. While unification lost, it was not as trounced as the anti-annexation associations had predicted. Overall, annexation lost by 4 percent across both Park Cities.[42] While disappointed, Mayor Rodgers (who won a new term in the same election) put a positive spin on the news, claiming that "the vote today convinces us we can win," and urging reconciliation.[43] Even though the vote was relatively close and both sides paid lip service to cooperation, both Dallas and the Park Cities began to take aggressive action shortly thereafter.

The result of the 1945 annexation attempt was a calcification of attitudes permanently impeding any further attempts at mutual unification. Within

Editorial cartoonists and the creators of campaign literature had a field day with the annexation debate, as these two contrasting images indicate.

two days of the vote, Dallas began to feast on outlying areas, annexing large tracts of undeveloped land. This was done primarily to encircle the Park Cities and prevent any expansion by them in the future. Additionally, Dallas began to enforce rules stating that all city employees must live within city limits.[44] Meanwhile, members of the Park Cities Anti-Annexation Association founded a new organization permanently dedicated to maintaining independence. Instead of temporary coalitions, the Highland Park Community League was founded as a political organization to present anti-annexation candidates for elections in the Park Cities.[45] Two of the founding chairmen, A. M. Grayson and Henry Davis, were leading members in the Anti-Annexation Association, and the League's first objective was the defeat of Mayor Slaughter, which it accomplished in the next election. According to the chairman of the League just months after its foundation, "Neutrality is not enough. We call for an openly expressed position on the subject of annexation."[46] The Community League would quickly expand and take control of Park City politics, ensuring that no city government officials or employees would express unionist positions, helping to stifle any future annexation attempts. Essentially, Dallas settled in to prevent any growth by Highland Park or University Park, while the Park Cities permanently dug in their heels on annexation. The status quo established in 1945 continues to this day. L

NOTES

[1]See, for instance, Diane Galloway and Kathy Matthews, *The Park Cities: A Walker's Guide & Brief History* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1988), 28.

[2]Virginia McAlester and Willis Winters, *Great American Suburbs: The Homes of the Park Cities* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2008), 73.

[3]"Two New Men on Board of Directors," *The Dallas Morning News,* December 5, 1917 (hereafter cited as *DMN*).

[4]"Steps to Annex Highland Park," *DMN*, April 20, 1917.

[5]"Highland Park Residents Complain at Sewage Tax," *DMN*, December 19, 1917.

[6]"Mayor Claiborne Replies to Commissioner Cason," *DMN*, December 22, 1917.

[7]"Submit Highland Park Annexation to People," *DMN*, March 2, 1918.

[8]"Highland Park Plans to Fight Annexation," *DMN*, March 6, 1918.

[9]"Highland Park Will Fight Annexation says Claiborne," *DMN*, April 4, 1918.

[10]City of Dallas Minute Books 1868-1977, Microfilm, Series 3, Volume 15, Pages 198-209, Dallas Municipal Archives, Dallas Texas, October 2 1918.

[11]"Mayor Makes Statement on Highland Park Annexation," *DMN*, April 5, 1918.

[12]"Petitioners Seek to Annex Highland Park," DMN, July 26, 1918.

[13]City of Dallas Minute Books 1868-1977, Microfilm, Series 3, Volume 15, Pages 198-209, Dallas Municipal Archives, Dallas, Texas, October 2, 1918.

[14]"Local Government in Texas," Texas Municipal League, accessed January 7, 2015, http://www.tml.org/pdftexts/HRHChapter1.pdf

[15]"Highland Park Case is Closed for Present," *DMN*, November 24, 1918.

[16]"Vote for Greater Houston," *The Houston Post. (Houston, Tex.), Vol. 33, No. 320, Ed. 1 Monday, February 18, 1918*, Newspaper, February 18, 1918; (http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth608718/ : accessed July 07, 2015), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, http://texashistory.unt.edu; crediting UNT Libraries, Denton, Texas.

[17]Expansion Petitions, Highland Park Harvey R. "Bum" Bright Library Archives, March 15, 1919; April 27, 1923; September 3, 1923; March 24, 1924; October 16, 1924; October 12, 1926; February 25, 1930.

[18]"Territory Seeking Annexation Paved," *DMN*, February 14, 1924.

[19]"Park Cities May Join in Holiday Decorations," *DMN*, November 29, 1928.

[20]W.P. Daman, "Two Park Cities Needed in Race with Houston," Letters From Readers, *DMN*, December 8, 1927.

[21]"Highland Park Report," *DMN*, February 12, 1932.

[22]"Highland Park-Dallas Elections on Merger Sought for December," *DMN*, October 18, 1932.

[23]"Signatures on Hi Park Merger Given Readily," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 19, 1932 (hereafter cited as *DTH*).

[24]"Hi Park Council to get Merger Offer Tonight," *DTH*, October 25, 1932.

[25]"Claim Against Hi Park Merger called Absurd," *DTH*, October 26, 1932.

[26]"Highland Park City Attorney Claims Merger Group Trying to Forestall Charter Changes," *Dallas Journal*, October 28, 1932.

[27]"Claims Park City Seeks to Dodge Election," *Dallas Journal*, November 3, 1932.

[28]"Borough System," Editorial, *DMN*, November 8, 1932.

[29]"Trickery Charged in Postponement of Merger Vote," *DTH*, November 8, 1932.

[30]"Anti-Annexation Association Formed in University Park," *Park Cities News*, January 26, 1945.

[31]"D"-Day Pamphlet, March 1, 1945, Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library.

[32]"Annexation Elections Officially Set for April 3," *DMN*, March 3, 1945.

[33]"The Plan to Master," Advertisement, *Park Cities News*, March 9, 1945.

[34]"Are We Worthy of Their Sacrifices?" Advertisement, *Park Cities News*, March 16, 1945.

[35]"Ralph Porter Favors Merger; Antis Charge Attempt to Divide," *DMN*, March 28, 1945.

[36]"Come on! Let's Face the Facts," Advertisement, *Park Cities News*, March 26, 1945.

[37] "Ex-Official of Park City Backs Merger," *DTH*, March 20, 1945; "Joe Thompson Boosts Immediate Unification," *DMN*, March 25, 1945; "Argument Increases Over Unification Issue," *DMN*, March 29.

[38]"University Park Mayor Backs Unification," *DMN*, March 18, 1945.

[39]Letter, Economic Research Bureau of Park Cities Anti-Annexation League to Citizens of Park Cities, March 29, 1945, Highland Park Library Archives.

[40]Mailed Advertisement, "Don't Be Taken In," Highland Park Library Archives.

[41]"The Plan to Master," Advertisement, *Park Cities News,* March 9, 1945.

[42]"Preston Hollow Joins City, Others Stay Out," *DMN*, April 4, 1945.

[43]"We Can Win, Mayor Says, Spirit Right," *DMN*, April 4, 1945.

[44]"Dallas Acts Quickly, Hems in Park Cities by New Annexations," *DMN*, April 6, 1945; "Dallas Bars Park City Citizens from Holding Places on Boards," *DMN*, April 7, 1945.

[45]Letter, Highland Park Community League to Fellow Members, November 10, 1945, Highland Park Library Archives.

[46]Letter, M.G. Lipscomb to Gus Neilon, March 24, 1947, Highland Park Library Archives.

Saving St. Ann's School
Historic Preservation in the City of Dallas

BY MARK DOTY

Twilight has settled over Dallas and a very well dressed and coifed crowd has descended on a lovely courtyard in the middle of Uptown to enjoy drinks, perhaps dinner, and certainly each other's company. Space heaters and a fire pit warm patrons in the colder months, while the bar area serves as the focal point during the warmer months. Inside, the space is well lit with large multi-light windows that bathe the indoor dining space and the collection of samurai art on the second level. This is Saint Ann Restaurant & Bar, located next to Saint Ann Court, a 26-story sleek skyscraper that cozies up to the red brick, two–story building next door. Few of the beautiful crowd that frequent this hot spot know its history or the fight to save this important piece of Dallas history; they just know that they like the feel and vibe. And yet, St. Ann's is a microcosm of the historic preservation movement in Dallas.

Street repairs to Turney Street (now Pearl) around 1940 were only the first in a series of urban projects that increased traffic around St. Ann's School.

Origins of historic preservation in Dallas

Battles were being fought in 1960s East Dallas against zoning changes along Gaston Avenue that razed many of the fine mansions for construction of garden-style apartments, that decade's version of the Village, where young, single professionals pouring into Dallas would mix and mingle after work and on the weekends. When the zoning changes began to affect nearby Swiss Avenue, concerned citizens banded together in 1973 to save the neighborhood from further decay and demolition.[1] Working with Weiming Lu, the new City of Dallas Director of Planning and Urban Development, the Swiss Avenue neighborhood was declared a City of Dallas historic district, the first neighborhood in the city with that distinction, the first structure being Trinity Methodist Church on McKinney. This protection was followed by designation of the West End historic district, South Boulevard/Park Row close to Fair Park, and Munger Place, adjacent to Swiss Avenue.[2] After a fast and furious start, the movement was met with both successes and setbacks. The salvation of the Adolphus Hotel, the Magnolia Building, and various neighborhoods was offset by the loss of Volk Brothers, the Sanger complex, and the Medical Arts Building. As David Dillon states in his *Dallas Architecture 1936-1986*, "While Dallas will never be a Savannah or San Antonio, it has more of a preservation conscience than it did a few years ago."[3] Both the city staff and concerned citizens, including the Historic Preservation League (now Preservation Dallas), persevered, winning some and losing some when it came to Dallas's dwindling collection of historic resources.

A peaked roof added in 1946 was among additions to the busy school, pictured here in the early 1960s.

Students in school uniforms lined up in front of St. Ann's School in the mid-1950s.

Little Mexico

One historic neighborhood undergoing dramatic change during this time was Little Mexico. Roughly bound by McKinney Avenue on the east, old Caruth Street on the south, the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas (KATY) railroad tracks on the west, and up to almost Hall Street on the north side, this northern fringe of downtown Dallas was originally settled by Polish Jewish immigrants in the late nineteenth century. Nicknamed "Little Jerusalem," the generally poor and impoverished area included grocery stores, restaurants, a theater, barbers, bakeries, shoe repairmen, churches, and synagogues, mostly clustered along Akard and N. Harwood streets.[4] Summit Play Park, later renamed Pike Park, for Edgar Pike, a Jewish jeweler of Austrian and German descent who married into the Sanger Brothers retailing family, was the lone green space for the area.[5] Beginning in the 1910s, as Mexican immigrants poured into the United States to escape the tumult of the Mexican Revolution, more and more moved into Little Jerusalem—so many that by the 1920s the area was firmly known as *la colonia* or Little Mexico. However, for a few decades, Jews and Mexicans lived side by side, attending school together at Cumberland Hill School on Akard Street. Even Pike Park, known within the community as "el parque de los judios," the Jewish Park, became the host of cultural celebrations such as Cinco de Mayo and Diez de Septiembre.[6]

In response to the influx of Mexican immigrants and their children, one of the synagogues was converted to Salon Zaragoza (escuela) school, and Our Lady of the Guadalupe church complex was constructed. Containing a rectory and small school, the complex started with 176 pupils in an old frame house. This was replaced with a larger structure that was made possible by a $15,000 donation by Ann Kilgallen of Chicago. St. Ann's School (elementary) located next to the church was opened in 1927, and quickly became a center of Catholic social life in Little Mexico. The Sisters of Charity who taught at St. Ann's School were easily distinguished by their elaborate habits. Tuition was $1 a year. The school was later enlarged in 1946 with a new peaked roof installed over the original flat roof of the original 1927 structure.[7]

Abandonment in the 1980s

The construction of Woodall Rodgers Expressway, meant to connect Interstate 35 with Central Expressway, along with the construction of the Dallas North Tollway, destroyed large portions of the neighborhood. Land speculators, along with developers interested in cheap land relatively close to downtown, snapped up property and pushed out residents. Grain elevators and other industrial uses, allowed near the neighborhood, contributed to the unhealthy living environment and gradually led to the decline of the area. With the redevelopment of the old Dallas Power & Light coal burning generating site into the American Airlines and Victory development, along with increased pressure from the burgeoning Uptown neighborhood to the east, few traces remained of Little Mexico.

Historic Designation

Although St. Ann's School had a high enrollment, the Roman Catholic Diocese decided to close it in 1974 and immediately started making plans to raze the neighboring Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and sell the school building. However, those plans were tabled, and it wasn't until the church burned mysteriously in 1987 that pressure once again began to mount against St. Ann's. Finally in early 1998, as the result of litigation against the Diocese, the St. Ann's site was targeted as "excess property" in order to sell the site to raise much needed funds. The rapid development of the Little Mexico neighborhood also made the large tract of land attractive to sale.

This tile mosaic thought to be by renowned Mexican artist Octavio Medellin has been preserved from the original church and school complex and now sits at the corner of the St. Ann's property.

However, as word began to trickle out that the school was in danger of being demolished, the community started to push back. The Dallas Landmark Commission authorized the initiation of landmark designation over the objection of the Diocese in August 1998 and approved the designation in November, with the knowledge that at least one or more friendly faces on Council would help carry the water for the designation as it made its way through the City Plan Commission and City Council.

As then Councilperson Veletta Forsythe Lill states, "To designate over a property owner's will, the government needs to hear from a committed and loud constituency. Buildings have constituencies. And whenever they are threatened or considered for demolition or renovation, people speak up."[8] Working on St. Ann's side was that it had a living and organized constituency. This distinguished group included singer Trini Lopez, former Councilmembers Anita Martinez and John Loza, established attorneys Danny Perez, George Solares, and Joseph Garza, as well as members of the Mexican-American families in the Dallas area.[9] But the battle was a hard one.

The Catholic diocese was strongly opposed to the designation from the beginning and remained so throughout the entire designation process. It was not afraid to use its clout and muscle in order to create guilt feelings among appointed and elected officials associated with the process. It went so far as to pack the City Council chambers with Catholic school children who would "suffer" if the historic designation was passed, and it threatened legal action against the city for the perceived devaluation of the property.[10]

However, undaunted Councilperson Lill, along with many others, including Hector Garcia, met with developers, structural engineers, and others to prove that the building, while challenged in some development aspects, was still structurally sound and economically viable. As Garcia, then Chair of the City Planning and Zoning Commission remembers, "Mexican-American Catholics

St. Ann's School fell into disrepair after closing in 1974, before restoration began in 2010.

held regular vigils, singing, saying the rosary and hiding religious medals throughout the property. We received hundreds of letters, faxes, and phone calls from good Catholics who understood the financial predicament of the Dallas Diocese at the time but, nevertheless, wanted to save the building because of its historic significance. And quite the reverse. Many understood the significance but felt strongly that the best long-term solution for the church was to get back on its feet financially, and this property would go a long way to doing so."[11]

"You could really hear the ghosts of St. Ann's," Lill recalls.[12] And those voices were loud and consistent, even when the process was seemingly doomed.

After historic designation passed the City Plan Commission in January 1999, with some modifications to the plan approved earlier by the Landmark Commission, the initial vote by the City Council was a failure. However, due to a procedural technicality, another vote was held a week later that passed, but only because of a last minute compromise agreed upon by the Diocese that would result in the demolition of the 1946 addition and creation of a smaller "no-build" buffer. The new ordinance took effect in June 1999.[13] In subsequent years, the designation of St. Ann's, and later the old Dallas High School (Crozier Tech) also over the owner's objection, proved to be catalysts to amending the city's development code to write specific demolition requirements and standards to be reviewed by the Landmark Commission. Up until then, there was only a demolition delay which could be waited out by a committed developer.[14]

St. Ann's was also the beginning of a small slate of other sites with Mexican-American ties designated in fairly quick succession, including the Luna Tortilla Factory and Pike Park.

Redevelopment by Harwood

Now that the building was designated, the challenge was to find an owner who would, for all intents and purposes, do right by the building that would come along with the rest of the site. Due to the compromise brokered at the last minute that shrunk the "no-build" zone to a small portion of the overall site, the rest of the block could be built out essentially with anything that the underlying zoning would allow.

Well known and respected developer Gabriel Barbier-Mueller and Harwood International, his company that had been slowly buying up property

in Little Mexico and constructing new office towers and other amenities to service the burgeoning Uptown and American Airlines Center nearby, purchased the property and plans began in 2007 for the next phase of life for St. Ann's.

As part of the proposed St. Ann's Tower development, the school structure would be adaptively used as a restaurant and gallery space, essentially an amenity for the office tower next door. As part of that redevelopment, the rear (east) façade of the structure would be modified to allow for enlarged openings on the first level and a new projection on the second level. The original wood, nine-over-nine, multi-light window style, replaced in subsequent renovations and updates, was to be re-installed to the other facades to restore the historic appearance. Since the Landmark Commission had to sign off on the proposal, city staff worked with Harwood beginning in March 2008 to craft a plan that would be suitable, even though it might not strictly meet the preservation criteria in regards to new additions or maintaining historic window and door openings on protected facades. The plan was originally met with some resistance from some commissioners who did not agree with the more modern additions and changes, as well as the way people would enter the building from the rear (east) now instead of the historic front door. However, the final vote was in support and construction began on the entire site. Additional design changes, including signage and landscape improvements to the patio area, would be approved by Landmark Commission in February 2009 and October 2010.

Along with the cornerstone of the 1946 addition, a tile mosaic of the Virgin of Guadalupe would be installed as a feature of the new garden along Harwood Street. The 4 by 8-foot mural, installed in 1946, is thought to be the work of Octavio Medellin, an artist born in Mexico in 1908,

Today a shady courtyard welcomes guests to St. Ann's Restaurant in the refurbished school building. Seen in the rear of this photo is the high-rise St. Ann's Tower.

who studied at the San Antonio Art School, then worked and taught in Dallas from 1942 to 1977.[15]

Today, St. Ann Restaurant & Bar, along with the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum: The Samurai Collection, are both crown jewels in an area that has seen multiple cultural venues (The Perot Museum of Nature and Science) and public spaces (Klyde Warren Park) spring up within the last five years.

Future opportunities

With the recent unfortunate, yet perfectly legal, demolition of a handful of National Register structures downtown, the preservation community once again finds itself at a watershed moment. A task force appointed by the mayor and city council to review how to strengthen the preservation program is a good step, but it will remain to be seen whether historic preservation will shape Dallas or be shaped by Dallas.

And yet, as St. Ann's exemplifies, if there is a committed, vocal constituency, a committed

council and city administration, and later a developer that is willing to take the time and effort to be creative, historic preservation can be the economic development and pride generator that it is intended to be. L

NOTES

[1]Suzanne Starling, "Stopping the Bulldozers," *Legacies* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 40-52.

[2]There are currently 145 City of Dallas Landmarks, both individual structures, sites, and neighborhoods that encompass nearly 4,000 properties with some level of protection from inappropriate exterior alterations or demolitions.

[3]David Dillon, *Dallas Architecture 1936-1986*, (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1985), 67.

[4]Diane Solis, "Where Big Dreams Flouished," *The Dallas Morning News*, September 14, 2014, B:1, 10.

[5]Ambrosio Villarreal Jr. and Kate Singleton, Dallas Landmark Commission, Landmark Nomination Form, Pike Park, 1986, City of Dallas Department of Sustainable Development and Construction – Current Planning – Historic Preservation.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Stan Solamillo, Dallas Landmark Commission, Landmark Nomination Form, St. Ann's School, 1998, City of Dallas Department of Sustainable Development and Construction – Current Planning – Historic Preservation.

[8]Veletta Forsythe Lill, interview by author, January 2015.

[9]Solamillo, Dallas Landmark Commission, Landmark Nomination Form, St. Ann's School, 18zz.

[10]Rose Farley, "On Holy Ground," *Dallas Observer*, February 4, 1999.

[11]Hector Garcia, email response to author, June 2015.

[12]Veletta Lill interview.

[13]City of Dallas Ordinance 23916, June 23, 1999.

[14]Veletta Lill interview.

[15]Michael E. Young, "Immaculate Preservation," *The Dallas Morning News*, March 13, 2007. B: 1, 8.

History in Conflict
Kennedy Assassination Memorialization in Dallas 1963-1989

BY STEPHEN FAGIN

On the first anniversary of the Kennedy assassination, November 22, 1964, United Press International estimated that hundreds of John F. Kennedy memorial tributes had been established around the world. By the time that news story was revisited exactly one year later, Kennedy memorials around the globe numbered well into the thousands. Within a week of the assassination, Cape Canaveral became Cape Kennedy. Idlewild Airport in New York became John F. Kennedy International. Within two months, Congress voted to name the National Cultural Center in Washington, D.C., the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. In Massachusetts, the President's home state, there were so many memorial proposals "that a special commission was created to choose among them." Around the world, in addition to newly-created statues and memorials, a number of schools, bridges, civic centers, golf courses, theaters, streets and avenues—even a forest and a mountain—were renamed in memory of President Kennedy.[1]

But what about Dallas? Burdened with the stigma "city of hate" and unfairly characterized as a toxic environment dominated by right-wing extremism, Dallas was identified around the world as the place where the President was shot. With Dealey Plaza as the city's most visited site, and with the Texas School Book Depository "one of the world's most photographed structures," President Kennedy's murder was a painful memory for local residents, and few were eager to perpetuate the tragedy with some permanent installation.[2]

While detailing grand memorials elsewhere in the United States, the UPI story from the second anniversary in November 1965 briefly mentioned that Dallasites would, within a year, unveil a bronze plaque in Dealey Plaza and that a memorial structure designed by architect Philip Johnson would follow a few blocks away—and it would, nearly five years later, in 1970. Overall, however, the Dallas response seemed lackluster by comparison. In a city so tormented by a global tragedy, one might well ask: how do you commemorate such an emotionally charged site?[3]

More than twenty-five years after the assassination, the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository became an exhibition on the life, death, and legacy of President Kennedy. Upon its opening, The Sixth Floor, later The Sixth Floor

Museum at Dealey Plaza, was characterized in the news media as the city's final response to November 22, 1963. The *Chicago Tribune* said that the somber display "help[ed] Dallas face its past." Accompanied by glowing coverage of the opening, the front page headline of the *Dallas Times Herald* read simply, "Today we stand whole again."[4]

The city's contemplative journey from 1963 to 1989, from assassination to commemoration, was marked by numerous anniversary memorial services and moments of silence, as well as a handful of interesting, controversial, and sometimes colorful so-called "permanent" installations that dared to bring attention to the events of November 22, 1963. Some were more successful than others.

At the time of the assassination, eccentric local resident Cosette Faust-Newton was preparing to open her Miramar Museum on Cedar Springs Road, filled with trinkets from her world travels.[5] She delayed its opening for two weeks because of the President's death. When the museum opened, a marquee outside declared it: "A Hero's Shrine, Dedicated to the Martyrized John F. Kennedy." A window display further dedicated the museum and its doll collection to Jacqueline Kennedy, the "Queenly Heroine of the Hour." That December, the Newtons' Christmas card was in solemn memoriam to President Kennedy and included a lengthy poem that seemed fixated on the idea that President Kennedy passed by her soon-to-open museum and that his eyes absorbed its neon sign in the final moments of his life. It read, in part:

ALIVE AND WELL,
—he motored by;
(Ten minutes later, he had to die.)
ALIVE AND WELL,
—he passed this door;
(A little later, he was no more.)
—
ALIVE AND WELL,
—he grasped our thought;
(Ten minutes later, his doom was wrought.)
ALIVE AND WELL,
—he absorbed our sign;
(So now our building's a HERO's shrine!)[6]

"The Eagle," a statue dedicated in 1964 in memory of President Kennedy, can still be seen outside the Dallas Trade Mart.

While this timely rebranding of the Miramar Museum may have been the first local memorial to President Kennedy, the first to emerge at a site associated with the assassination came in October 1964 at the Dallas Trade Mart.

One of eleven pieces in the International Sculpture Garden outside the Trade Mart, "The Eagle" was a four-foot-wide bronze sculpture of a perched eagle with its wings at full spread. It was not an original sculpture but one of five authorized replicas of the lectern of the Cathedral Church of St. Michael in Coventry, England. The original creator, Elizabeth Frink, was commissioned to design a unique pedestal for the Dallas installation that included a quote from William Blake, taken from his book *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-93): "When thou seest an eagle, thou seest a portion of genius; lift up thy head!" It was dedicated by "the friends of John F. Kennedy who had awaited his arrival at the Trade Mart luncheon on November 22nd." Bishop Cuthbert Bardsley of Coventry said in his dedication on October 12, 1964, that "as the eagle soars into the air, so may we believe that the soul of John F. Kennedy soars into life and into eternity." Today, "The Eagle" can still be seen at the Dallas Trade Mart, just outside the main entrance.[7]

Sculptor Anthony Paness (far right), alongside Congressman Earle Cabell, admires his bust of President Kennedy at the opening of the John F. Kennedy Living Center in 1965.

A home at 3802 Oak Lawn became a unique memorial to President Kennedy in May 1965. The John F. Kennedy Living Center for Exceptional Youth was billed as the first boarding home in the United States for mentally challenged young adult men. The founder was Dixie Shelley Jones, an independently wealthy registered nurse who also administered The Children's Haven, a 60-bed children's hospital on Fairmount Street, as well as a research foundation and a summer camp facility in New Mexico, all of which benefited the mentally challenged. Unlike most Dallas memorials, Jones's Living Center boasted direct involvement from the Kennedy family. The late President's sister, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics, visited the site a month prior to opening and had previously endorsed the concept.[8]

The dedication was held on what would have been John F. Kennedy's 48th birthday, May 29, 1965. Congressman Earle Cabell joined Judges Sarah T. Hughes and Lew Sterrett as a telegram from President Lyndon Johnson was read aloud, congratulating those who had sponsored "this worthy cause to which [President Kennedy] was dedicated." Also in attendance was Mrs. Marie Tippit, widow of slain Dallas police officer J. D. Tippit, and the Rev. Oscar Huber, who had administered the Last Rites to President Kennedy at Parkland Memorial Hospital. Great emphasis was placed on the bust of President Kennedy that was unveiled outside the Living Center that day. The sculptor, 63-year-old Anthony Paness of Paris, Texas, toiled for fifteen months on the bronze effigy and wept as the bust was unveiled while an Air Force band played "God Bless America." Although he was best known as the man who sculpted Abraham Lincoln's left eyebrow at Mount Rushmore, Paness considered his Kennedy bust one of his finest works. However, not everyone was impressed. *Dallas Morning News* reporter Kent Biffle described this depiction of Kennedy as that of "a puffy-faced man with a curiously amused expression." Paness explained that the President's expression came to him in a dream. For reasons unknown, that original bust had been substituted with a different but equally curious likeness of the late President by 1971.[9]

Despite being designed for young adults, the first residents or "patients," as they were called in the news media, were actually children ages five to thirteen. Dubbed the "Kennedy Kids," they were occasionally visited by special guests passing through Dallas, including Muriel Humphrey, wife of the Vice President. Sen. Ralph Yarborough dressed as Santa Claus at Christmas 1966 and handed out gifts to the "Kennedy Kids." For several years, the Living Center held well-attended memorial services on the assassination anniversary, officiated by the Rev. Oscar Huber. Unfortunately this "permanent" memorial was short-lived. On the evening of May 27, 1972, a two-alarm fire swept through the center while twelve patients, ages nine to twenty, and their counselors and caregivers all scrambled to safety. No one was injured and no cause was determined, though the center had been abuzz with activity that day in preparation for the boys' upcoming summer

trip to New Mexico. The John F. Kennedy Living Center, completely destroyed with damages estimated at more than $50,000, was not rebuilt, though Dixie Shelley Jones's primary Dallas facility, the Children's Haven, remained in operation.[10]

Another memorial tribute, though one of a considerably different tone, was also unveiled in the mid-1960s. The Southwestern Historical Wax Museum opened with the State Fair of Texas in 1963 in the Varied Industries building and then became a year-round exhibit in the Creative Arts building. Beginning less than a year after the assassination, the museum unveiled a series of vignettes meant to memorialize the late President's visit to Dallas. The introductory tableau showed President and Mrs. Kennedy, along with Governor and Mrs. Connally, arriving at Dallas Love Field. Adjacent to that display was the swearing-in of President Johnson. Judge Sarah T. Hughes, the real one, was on hand next to her wax likeness to dedicate this diorama in September 1964.[11]

The third diorama proved the most controversial. A wax figure of Lee Harvey Oswald, rifle in hand, stood among schoolbook boxes in a tableau that the Associated Press called "eerie" and "discomforting." The wax museum's longtime creative director Drew Hunter said that, over the years, "there may have been a few that thought it was disrespectful to have it right there with Kennedy and such. [It] was a little, I guess, sensationalistic. But it's a wax museum, you know." Lee Harvey Oswald's mother, Marguerite, visited her son's likeness on more than one occasion. Photographing her son's wax figure in 1965, she told museum officials that, while Oswald's hairline was incorrect, they had captured his mouth perfectly. To complete this memorial to President Kennedy, an empty rocking chair was illuminated by a single spotlight.[12]

This Kennedy assassination display, later joined by a vignette depicting Abraham Lincoln's shooting at Ford's Theatre, made the move from Fair Park to the museum's new location in Grand Prairie in May 1972. The Kennedy scenes remained heavily-promoted as the museum grew to be billed as the largest wax museum in the United States. None of these tableaus exist today, however, as the entire museum was destroyed by a four-alarm fire in 1988 that officials believe started in the building's electrical wiring. More than 300 figures and hundreds of historical artifacts were lost in the blaze.[13]

The first memorial at the actual site of the assassination began to take shape in the summer of 1965. It was an effort launched by a single individual, Richardson resident Martina Langley, who visited Dealey Plaza more than one hundred times over an eighteen-month period to pay her respects and speak with visitors from around the world. She joined a dozen other individuals in organizing the Committee for Kennedy Assassination Site Memorial. Langley and her associates passed out leaflets arguing that Dealey Plaza was as historically significant as Ford's Theatre.[14]

The committee's efforts led the Dallas Park Board to propose a multi-paneled bronze marker mounted on marble supports near the statue of George Bannerman Dealey, where a similar bronze display honoring Dealey was already installed. As originally designed, the new plaques only briefly mentioned the President's shooting beneath eight detailed paragraphs about the city's early history. Though the park board twice approved the wording of the $8,500 marker, Langley protested that the Dallas historical information was extraneous, and she appealed the matter before the city council in March 1966. After some heated discussion, the city council finally agreed, and the twin 500-pound bronze plaques installed in November of that year acknowledged only the Kennedy assassination. One displayed a map of Dealey Plaza, identifying the motorcade route and the approximate location where the assassination took place. The second plaque described the shooting in a straightforward manner, primarily providing directional information. The name "Lee Harvey Oswald" was deleted during final review, though the plaque did acknowledge the findings of the Warren Commission.[15]

On November 22, 1966, the third anniversary of the assassination, Langley led several hundred people in a memorial service in front of the

These twin bronze plaques, installed in Dealey Plaza in 1966, acknowledged the Kennedy assassination. They can still be found in their original location.

plaques where her children placed a large floral display bearing the message "Lest We Forget." Today, these often-photographed markers are still found in their original location. One of the key reasons that Langley pushed for a Dealey Plaza memorial was that she was unhappy that the city's official memorial tribute to John F. Kennedy was to be located a few blocks away, behind the Old Red Courthouse, and was delayed for a number of years.[16]

The John F. Kennedy Memorial, designed by noted American architect Philip Johnson, was finally dedicated on June 24, 1970. Plans began within days of the assassination when Dallas County Judge Lew Sterrett proposed a Dallas memorial to the fallen President. The idea was immediately controversial, with many—including former Mayor R.L. Thornton and then-Mayor Earle Cabell—proposing that Dallas actively contribute to a national memorial in Washington, D.C., instead. Nearly 200 people sent in letters to the memorial commission suggesting instead a "living memorial," calling for a Kennedy scholarship program or a monetary contribution to the arts. When consulted, the Kennedy family suggested "something very simple" for a Dallas installation, and they approved the selection of Philip Johnson as architect.[17]

Although the Dallas County Commissioners Court designated the site for the memorial structure in 1964—across from the new courthouse and some 200 yards from the assassination site—the project was delayed while donations were solicited and an underground parking garage was constructed at the site. The John F. Kennedy Memorial is a roofless room thirty feet tall and fifty feet square with a simple black granite slab in the center. Johnson envisioned "something very humble and Spartan . . . a memorial for one whose remains lie elsewhere."[18]

Despite the addition of interpretative signage which explains the concept of the cenotaph, or open tomb, the memorial has confused visitors expecting to find a statue or bust of the late President inside. *The Dallas Morning News* once called it a "stark and ugly monument," though it has served a unique purpose over the decades as a gathering place for assassination memorial servic-

The John F. Kennedy Memorial, designed by architect Philip Johnson, under construction in 1970.

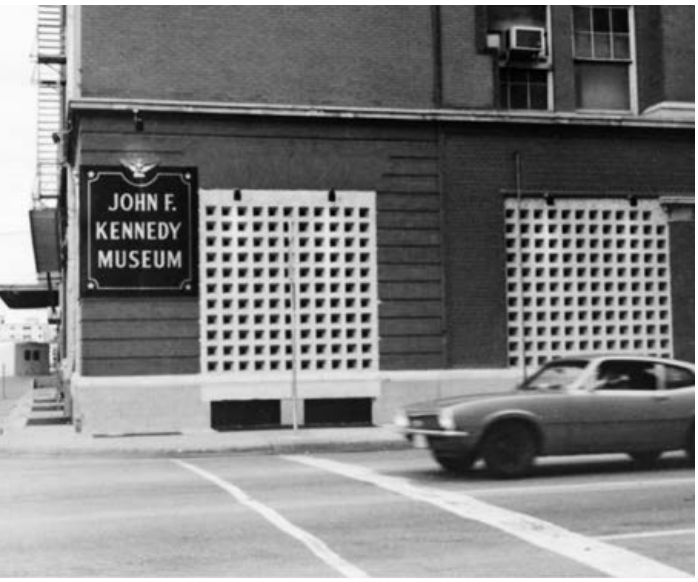
es, concerts, and community activism which link the memory and unfulfilled promise of President Kennedy to modern day social issues.[19]

In summer 1970, shortly after the dedication of the John F. Kennedy Memorial, construction began nearby on a 10,000-square-foot privately-owned museum on the first floor of the former Dal-Tex building, across Houston Street from the Texas School Book Depository. Dallas residents John and Estelle Sissom established their museum as both an opportunity for profit and "to set the record straight" about Dallas. John Sissom had a varied background. A onetime professional magician, he had owned a joke and novelty shop, a service station, and a series of gift shops before launching into the museum business with himself as both the owner and curator.[20]

The for-profit and decidedly homemade museum, mere steps from the assassination site, generated controversy. In 1971, the *Dallas Times Herald* questioned whether the facility was "a specialized historical collection" or "a ghoulish attraction." For a time, when the facility brought in several hundred visitors each day, it was considered one of Dallas's leading tourist attractions, though not all of its customers were impressed. William Perry, a director with the National Association for Mental Health, was so incensed by what he described as "a horror show," that he immediately wrote the President's late brother, Senator Edward Kennedy, and implored him to take action to ensure that this "cheap display" closed its doors. Kennedy offered no comment and took no action.[21]

The museum itself was comprised of a few Kennedy mementos, newspaper reproductions, and photographs. One highlight, according to the promotional material, was a shrine-like space that featured a portrait of President Kennedy by Dallas artist Dimitri Vale. John Sissom acknowledged that he had received "some criticism" for his museum but stressed, "I feel we have done more for the memory of the late President than [others] have." His museum emerged in part, he said, from the fact that nothing else had been done.[22]

The photographs, text panels, and memorial painting were all just a prelude to the signature installation: a twenty-two minute multimedia presentation designed by Sissom entitled "The



For eleven years, Dallas residents John and Estelle Sissom operated their John F. Kennedy Museum across Houston Street from the Texas School Book Depository.

Incredible Hours." Against a large painted backdrop, a hand-painted model of Dealey Plaza and a portion of downtown Dallas set the stage for a dramatic program in which a string of lights followed the motorcade along its route accompanied by music, narration, and slides. It was an intricate system, and Sissom received a U.S. Patent for the apparatus in 1974. His application described it as "an automated theater" in which a series of "timing pulses . . . controls the illumination of indicator lights and a plurality of slide projectors."[23]

The Sissoms' museum lasted eleven years before they lost their lease during a major building renovation which began in early 1982. It had some difficulties along its way. According to a family friend, the Sissoms were crushed when an employee stole thousands of dollars from the museum, prompting them to become more personally involved in ticket sales. There was also general damage and petty vandalism visible by the late 1970s. A Mannlicher-Carcano rifle, similar to the one allegedly used by Lee Harvey Oswald during the assassination, was displayed alongside an ammunition clip and three empty cartridges. By 1979, the shells and clip had been stolen right off the wall though the hardened strips of glue that once held them in place remained on display. A *Dallas Times Herald* story on the closing of the museum mentioned: "The bathrooms are dingy, here and there a light is burned out, and several pictures are missing from displays."[24]

For a brief time, John Sissom hoped to relocate, but in the end he decided to donate most of the museum's contents to the organizers of what would become The Sixth Floor exhibit inside the Texas School Book Depository. But as with the wax museum and the John F. Kennedy Living Center, fire also played a role in the story of the John F. Kennedy Museum. In August 1984, while the Republican National Convention was taking place in Dallas, there was an arson attempt at the Texas School Book Depository. The five-alarm fire, which caused approximately $250,000 worth of damage, began in the building's basement, near where the Sissom material was being stored. Much of it was destroyed, though what memorabilia survived the fire remains part of The Sixth Floor Museum's collection to the present day.[25]

The 1984 arson attempt briefly interrupted ongoing fundraising for the upcoming exhibition on the Depository's sixth floor. Following an often bitter and controversial battle to save the Texas School Book Depository from demolition—which resulted in Dallas County purchasing the building as part of a 1977 bond package—a twelve-year effort began to open an historical exhibition that would explore the life, death, and legacy of President Kennedy. A number of community leaders, historians, politicians, and museum professionals were involved, but the key figures were local preservation activist Lindalyn Adams and Conover Hunt, a historian and author from Virginia who moved to Dallas in the late 1970s.[26]

The Sixth Floor exhibition opened on Presidents Day, February 20, 1989, a little over twenty-five years after the Kennedy assassination. In the handwritten memory books at the conclusion of the exhibit, many in those early days

The Visitors Center and external elevator shaft for The Sixth Floor exhibit under construction in 1988. The Sixth Floor opened on Presidents Day, February 20, 1989.

reflected on their own memories of the assassination, acknowledging that the exhibit brought the era back to life for a few moments. One lifelong city resident wrote that after Kennedy was shot, she "was angry and shamed" to live in the community. "Today in '89 on the 6th Floor," she wrote more than a quarter-century after the Kennedy assassination, "I'm proud to be a Dallasite." The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, which many opposed during its long development, has today become a part of the cultural landscape of Dallas and is a site of research, education, memory, and history.[27]

This slow process of memorialization between 1963 and 1989 exemplifies how difficult it was for the City of Dallas to come to terms with this dark legacy and internalize this terrible moment in time. What we find in Dallas during this twenty-five-year period was largely an uncertain commercialization of the assassination, arguments and controversy, and a series of grassroots efforts fueled by one or two passionate individuals. The city's official memorial was long delayed and then became a point of confusion and debate. And during all of this, the Texas School Book Depository lingered, in the words of one writer, "staring with vacant and accusing eyes." To quote Richard Sellars of the National Park Service: "Do we dare preserve what still hurts?" Ultimately, Dallas found a way to make that happen as demonstrated not just by the twenty-six-year history of The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, but also by the city's commemorative efforts during the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination in November

2013. Therefore, when a news story is written on the one hundredth anniversary of the assassination in 2063, which recounts the various memorials and tributes to President Kennedy found around the world, in the long term, Dallas's efforts will hopefully rank near the top of that list.[28]

NOTES

[1]UPI, "Many Memorials Honor Kennedy," *The Dallas Morning News* (hereafter cited as *DMN*), November 22, 1964; UPI, "Thousands of Memorials Have Appeared for Kennedy," *DMN*, November 22, 1965.

[2]Hugh Aynesworth, "Depository Controversy Lingers," *DMN*, November 18, 1971.

[3]UPI, "Thousands of Memorials Have Appeared for Kennedy," *DMN*, November 22, 1965.

[4]Paul Weingarten, "JFK exhibit helps Dallas face its past," *Chicago Tribune*, February 21, 1989; Scott Sunde and David Fritze, ""Today we stand whole again,"" *Dallas Times Herald* (hereafter cited as *DTH*), February 20, 1989.

[5]For the full story of Cosette Faust-Newton and how her Miramar Museum was part of an ongoing battle with Highland Park, please see Cynthia Shearer, "Cosette Faust-Newton's Garden Ship of Dreams," *Legacies* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 28-41.

[6]Shearer, "Cosette Faust-Newton's Garden Ship of Dreams," 37; 1963 Christmas Card, Fred Fuston Collection/ The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. Photograph, George Reid Collection/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza.

[7]"'Eagle' From Coventry For Sculpture Garden," *DMN*, May 16, 1964; "Kennedy Memorial Dedicated to Peace," *DMN*, October 13, 1964.

[8]"Dedication of Retarded Home Held," *DMN*, April 28, 1965.

[9]"JFK Memorial Bust Unveiled in Dallas," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 30, 1965; Kent Biffle, "Sculptor Cries as Kennedy Bust Unveiled," *DMN*, May 30, 1965.

[10]"Child Hospital To Open Annex," *DMN*, November 18, 1965; "Ceremonies in Dallas To Honor JFK's Memory," *DMN*, November 22, 1965; "Kennedy Tributes Planned in Dallas," *DMN*, November 20, 1966; Bill Hunter, "Tuition Boost Receives Fire of Lawmakers," *DMN*, January 3, 1967; James Dunlap, "Fire Doesn't Dampen Trip," *DMN*, June 3, 1974; Rebecca Sherman, "Portrait of a Ladykiller," *D Magazine*, December 1998.

[11]Drew Hunter. Interview by Stephen Fagin, August 13, 2010, Oral History Collection/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza; "Wax Museum Opens Sunday," *DMN*, September 15, 1963; "Wax Museum Unveils Oath-Taking Scene," *DMN*, September 6, 1964.

[12]Hunter interview; Mike Cochran, "Several Lives Wrenched Apart When Kennedy Died," *DMN*, November 22, 1965.

[13]Hunter interview; Rosalie McGinnis, "Grand Prairie Gets Museum," *DMN*, November 4, 1971; "Wax Museum Opens Doors," *DMN*, May 20, 1972; Al Brumley, "Fire Destroys Wax Museum," *DMN*, September 10, 1988.

[14]"Death Site Memorial Sought," *DMN*, June 19, 1965; Lacie Ballinger, et. al., *The Rededication of the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Memorial: June 24, 2000* (Dallas: The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, 2000).

[15]Carl Harris, "Park Board to Get Plans For Bronze JFK Marker," *DMN*, March 6, 1966; "Kennedy Memorial Marker," *DMN*, March 8, 1966; "Council Asks New Study of JFK Marker," *DMN*, March 22, 1966; "Data Approved For JFK Marker," *DMN*, April 5, 1966; Gene Ormsby, "Kennedy Plaque Placed," *DMN*, November 17, 1966.

[16]Ormsby, "Kennedy Plaque Placed"; Maryln Schwartz, "Tribute Paid to Kennedy," *DMN*, November 23, 1966.

[17]Ballinger, et. al., *The Rededication of the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Memorial*.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Jacquielynn Floyd, "Love JFK Memorial or hate it, at least we're talking," *DMN*, March 10, 2006; David Dillon, "Let it be - Don't move it or redesign it," *DMN*, April 10, 2006.

[20]"JFK Museum to Tell Reaction to Tragedy," *DMN*, July 6, 1970; Jeffry S. Unger, "Looking for a Home," *DTH*, November 22, 1981; "John Sissom," obituary, Broomfield Enterprise, Boulder, CO, July 8, 2009.

[21]"JFK Museum Scored," *DTH*, November 30, 1971; Dr. David L. Vanderwerken, "NEH project focuses on Dallas building with a tragic past," *The Texas Humanist*, May 1979; Dan Piller, "Kennedy museum losing its lease," *DTH*, October 29, 1981.

[22]"JFK Museum Scored," *DTH*, November 30, 1971; John F. Kennedy Museum brochure, Phil Willis Collection/ The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza.

[23]Photographs, Jeanne Reilly Collection/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza; "Projector and Indicator Coordinating Apparatus," U.S. Patent 3,804,503. Sissom, John E. April 16, 1974. <http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=%2Fnetahtml%2FPTO% 2Fsrchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=3,804,503.PN.&OS=PN/3,804,503&RS=PN/3,804,503>

[24]Betty Jo Standridge. Interview by Stephen Fagin, August 11, 2014, Oral History Collection/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza; Jeffry S. Unger, "Looking for a Home," *DTH*, November 22, 1981; Photographs, Jeanne Reilly Collection/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza.

[25]Barry Boesch, "Fire Breaks Out At Book Depository," *DMN*, August 23, 1984; Walter Borges, "Depository Fire Was Set, Officials Say," *DMN*, August 24, 1984.

[26]Borges, "Depository Fire Was Set, Officials Say."

[27]Memory Books, The Sixth Floor Exhibit, February 1989, Institutional Archives/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza.

[28]Mrs. Edward Oliver, "Letters: Yes Vote Urged For Proposition 3," *DMN*, November 3, 1977; Richard Sellars, "Memorial Can Confront A Tragedy," *DMN*, June 1, 1987.

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The Infidels of Denison

BY STEVEN R. BUTLER

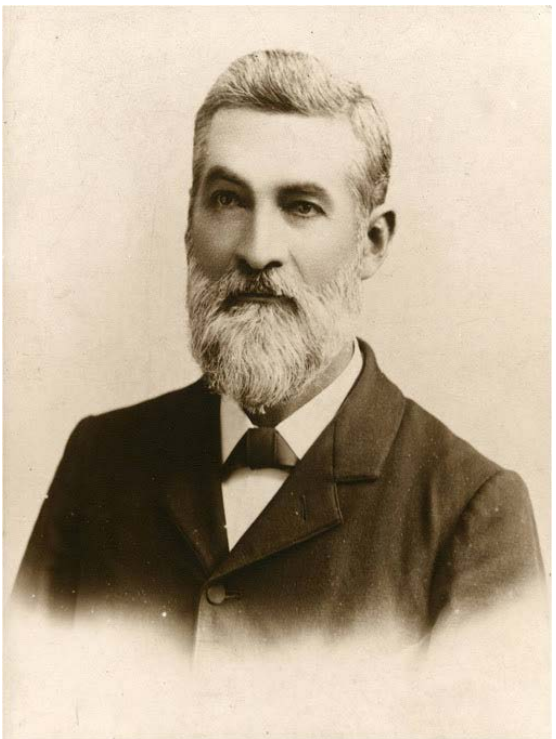
"The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments, of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue, are complete skeptics in religion."

—John Stuart Mill,
from *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill* (1873)

Denison, Texas, a small city located on the Red River about seventy-five miles north of Dallas, is perhaps best known as the birthplace of General and President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who resided there until he was two years old, at which time his family moved to Kansas. Although their city's association with the leader of the allied troops that defeated Nazi Germany in World War II and then went on to preside over one of the most prosperous eras in American history is somewhat tenuous, the citizens of Denison are understandably proud of it.

Denison is likewise proud of its connection to Thomas Volney Munson, a world renowned nineteenth century viticulturist who after phylloxera (tiny, sap-sucking insects) threatened to destroy the French wine industry, almost singlehandedly saved it not only by providing French grape growers with valuable scientific advice but also phylloxera-resistant graft stock from his own North Texas vineyards. In 1888, in grateful thanks, the French government awarded Munson a gold medal—the Legion of Honor Chevalier du Mérite Agricole.[1] Volney, as his family called him, was also a respected local businessman and educator, receiving several other honors and awards in his lifetime, including, in 1906, an honorary doctorate from the State College of Kentucky in Lexington[2]—where in 1870 he had earned a B.A. and in 1883 a Master's degree.

Although the Eisenhower name is better known outside of Denison, locally the Munson moniker is equally well-remembered. Professor Munson's two-story brick home, which he called "Vinita," has been preserved by admirers, and like the former President's, his surname can be found on both street signs and historical markers throughout the town, although in some cases the references are to one or the other of his philanthropist brothers, J. T. and W. B. or "Ben" Munson, for whom Munson Park and Munson Stadium were named. T. V. Munson's own memorial—a hillside vineyard at the West Campus of Grayson College, named in his honor and overlooked by the college's Viticulture and Enology Center—commemorates his life's work. The celebrated horticulturist's name and portrait also wave alongside those of President Eisenhower and



Thomas V. Munson maintained his position as the leading "infidel" in North Texas until his death in 1913.

airline pilot Chesley Sullenberger on decorative banners that hang from light poles outside the Red River Railroad Museum, declaring Denison a "Home of Heroes." For all these reasons, it is a near certainty that the Munson name is familiar to most Denisonians, even those who may not be acquainted with the history of the family or their multiple civic contributions.

During T.V. Munson's thirty-seven-year-long residence—from April 1876 until his death in January 1913—Denison, in common with most other Texas towns and cities, was a place where on Sunday mornings the sound of church bells called the faithful to come and worship God. A bird's eye view of the town, published in 1891, shows no fewer than fourteen churches—with the Methodists and "Babtists" (as it is spelled on the map) having a slight majority over the Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians.

In 1890, when the population numbered 10,958,[4] there was one church for every approximately 782 inhabitants.

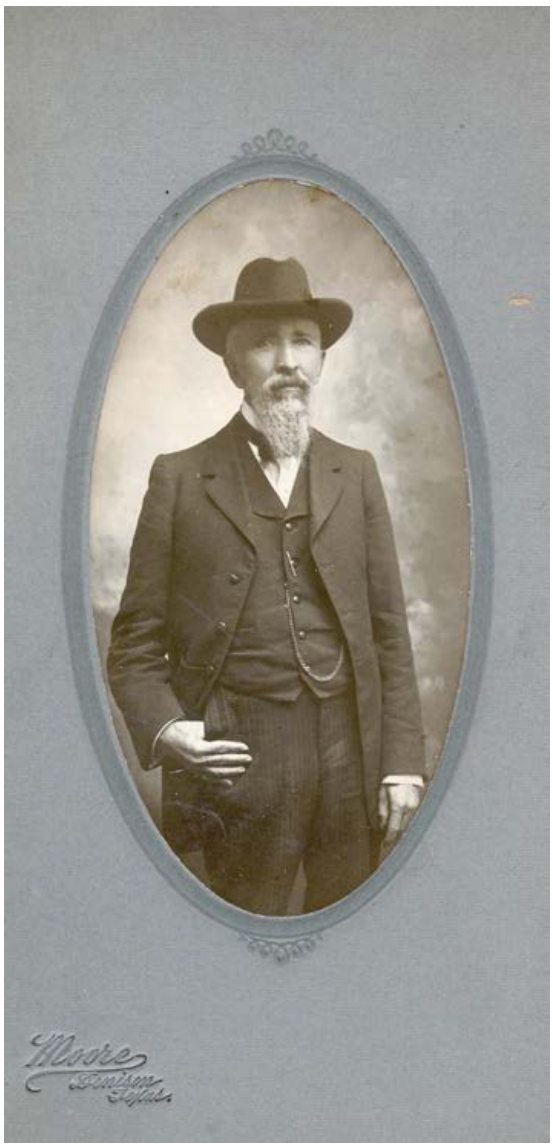
At a glance, the Denison of today (2015) appears to be even more religious than it was in 1891, with no fewer than thirty-five Baptist churches, seven Methodist congregations, two Presbyterian churches, one each of Orthodox, Lutheran, and Episcopal, two Roman Catholic churches, six "spirit-filled" congregations, and sixteen "other" types of Christian denominations. There are also three Jewish synagogues and one Muslim mosque, for a total of seventy-five houses of worship of one kind or another. With a current population of 22,939,[5] the ratio is one for every 3,000 people, which is more than three times larger than the 1890 proportion. While that number could easily be misconstrued as indicating a decline in religious fervor, anyone taking a driving tour of the town can clearly see that many of today's churches are larger in physical size than their nineteenth century counterparts and can therefore accommodate more worshipers. In sum, it appears that in the early twenty-first century, just as it was in Munson's time, Denison is a place where religion is firmly rooted and where apart from the relative handful of Jews and Muslims, a Christian majority presumably takes the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ seriously. In view of all this, it seems especially ironic that of the town's three most celebrated favorite sons, the one who lived there the longest and therefore had the most direct effect on its growth and development, namely T.V. Munson, was an atheist—or in the vernacular of the time, an "infidel," as Munson called himself—the same as Luther Burbank, the distinguished California botanist who the equally-eminent Texas grape-grower considered a friend as well as colleague. Yet the fact that Munson not only found the religious beliefs of most of his fellow Denisonians erroneous but also took every opportunity to publicly say so seems not to be widely known.

The reason almost certainly lies in the fact that until the twenty-first century Munson's biographers focused almost exclusively on his achievements in viticulture, business, and community service, all of which were noteworthy, but ignored his infidelity, if indeed they even knew

about it. Whether this was a deliberate cover-up, in the way that President Franklin D. Roosevelt's physical handicap was purposely kept out of the limelight, or whether it stems from simple lack of knowledge is uncertain. Whatever the explanation might be, to this day Professor Munson's anti-religious sentiments remain largely hidden from public view. Interestingly, this state of affairs is attributable not to Munson himself, who never kept his opinions secret, but rather to those who have taken it upon themselves to perpetuate his memory.

The earliest known biographical sketch of Munson was published in Denison's *Sunday Gazetteer* in 1891, less than three years after the French had rewarded him for saving their vineyards from ruin. Like all subsequent biographies, it was complimentary, emphasizing the hard-working nurseryman's education and achievements in business and viticulture. The news that three months earlier Munson had been re-elected treasurer of the Texas Liberal League, a statewide Freethought society he helped organize in 1890 went unmentioned. The writer likewise failed to point out that Munson was president of the Denison Philosophical and Social Club, a local discussion group he helped to found and one that frequently addressed religious as well as scientific issues. What makes these omissions all the more remarkable is that this particular biography was almost certainly composed by friend and fellow "infidel," B. C. (Bredett Corydon) Murray, editor of the *Sunday Gazetteer,* a man who was hardly unaware of all these things. Until the early twenty-first century, all subsequent sketches were similarly discreet.

The first Munson biographer to call attention to the celebrated nurseryman's exceptional opinions was Dr. Roy E. Renfro, Jr., former head of the Grayson County College Viticulture and Enology program, who collaborated with writer Sherrie S. McLeRoy to produce a book entitled *Grape Man of Texas: The Life of T. V. Munson* (hereafter referred to as *Grape Man*), which was published in 2004 and reissued in 2008. For Renfro, who probably knows more about Munson's career as a viticulturist than anyone else alive today, writing this book



Bredett C. Murray, another "infidel," helped publish the cause through his newspapers, the *Denison Daily News* and its successor, the *Sunday Gazetteer*.

as well as conducting the extensive research that preceded publication was undoubtedly a labor of love. It was also a rewarding experience, with both editions winning "Best of the Best" awards from the Gourmand Society of Madrid and Sweden.[6] Before failing health forced him to retire in 2013, Renfro also earned accolades for spearheading the restoration of "Vinita."

Although *Grape Man's* primary focus is on

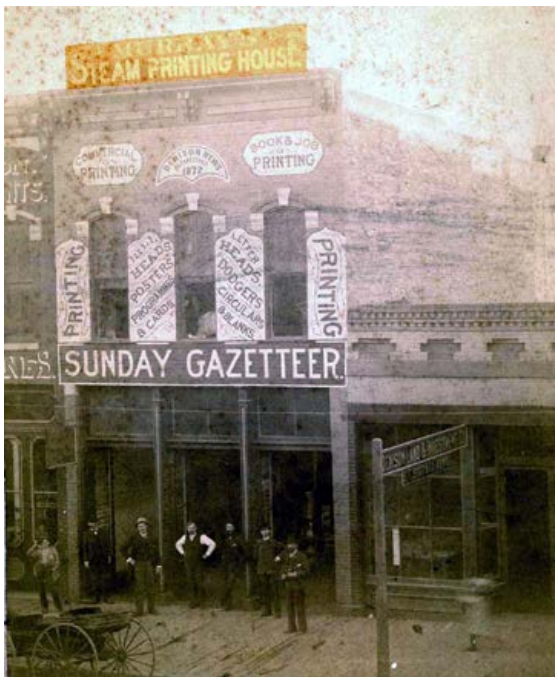
Munson's fame as a horticulturist, the authors did not sweep his infidelity under the rug like earlier biographers. That being said, the small amount of space they devoted to the topic, combined with their seeming misunderstanding of it, suggests that for some reason they did not investigate this aspect of Munson's life as thoroughly as they could have done.

A mere five paragraphs in the book's first chapter cover the years when Volney, as he preferred to be called, and his younger brother W. B. (William Benjamin or "Ben") were students at Kentucky A.&M. During that time both men reportedly "struggled" to reconcile the teachings of the Christian religion in which they had been raised with "the new science." In 1868 Volney wrote an article entitled "A Journey Backward and a Glance Forward," which was published in a student periodical, *The Brass Button*. It was an exercise that led him to "return to God," at least for a time, owing to the seeming inability of post-Civil War era science to explain all the things he wanted to know. The authors conclude this section by informing readers that in later life each of the two brothers came to "an accommodation" with religion. Ben's practice was to be "a generous benefactor to several denominations" on account of his recognition of "the church's role in promoting good moral conduct, which he honored." As for Volney, "while loathing the narrow-minded, superstitious strictures that made his scientific outlook seem suspect to many, [he] never lost his belief in the God that had created the wondrous world about him."[7] This unequivocal pronouncement, combined with an equally unambiguous statement in the eleventh chapter, that Munson "believed that science, with God's help, could make the world the utopia he knew it could be,"[8] suggests that the subject of their study was a moderate or liberal Christian who found a way to reconcile his religious beliefs with modern scientific theories, such as evolution, which tended to call the Scriptures into question.

Although very little of Munson's personal correspondence has survived, newspapers of the period confirm that the irreverent nurseryman was not only a disbeliever in Biblical revelation but also an unabashed anti-theist who was unafraid to share his thoughts and express his opinions in print for all the world to see. In hindsight, his exceptional outlook almost seems inevitable given that his middle name, the one he preferred to use, was reportedly inspired by the title of a late eighteenth century book, *Volney's Ruins of Empires*. Translated in part from the original French by Thomas Jefferson, *Volney's Ruins* not only contained a critical examination of the world's religions but also advocated separation of church and state.

Newspapers likewise reveal that Munson was not the only person in Denison to publicly subject religion to critical examination, nor was he the first. In the summer of 1878, only six years after the "Gate City"—Denison's nickname by virtue of its geographic location—had sprung into existence on the North Texas frontier and only two years after the celebrated grape-grower became a resident, one of the state's leading newspapers reported that "Northern Texas continues to be the chosen arena of religious controversies, which occasionally warm up to something like the present temperature" after Reverend Laurence W. Scott (a.k.a. Elder Scott), President of the Wahpakmucka Institute in Indian Territory, spent four evenings—Tuesday, July 9 through Friday, July 12—at Denison's Nolan Hall debating the divine origin of the Bible with Capt. H. H. Brown, a noted infidel lecturer from Brooklyn, New York,[9] a debate that Brown won in the opinion of the *Denison Daily News*.[10] Later that same year Nolan Hall was the venue for a lecture entitled "The Right to Disbelieve," in which J. R. Kendall of Sherman, who among other things proposed that "the Christian religion is but a copy of the Ancient Hindoo religion." Kendall also sought to convince his listeners that Christianity had "failed to civilize man." Whether or not Munson was in the audience on either occasion is unknown but in view of the topics being discussed it certainly seems likely.

On Sunday June 27, 1880, almost exactly two years following the Scott-Brown debate, a



By publishing many of T. V. Munson's writings and reporting his speeches, the *Sunday Gazetteer* helped spread his doctrine of freethinking. Editor B. C. Murray is pictured at the far right outside the newspaper office.

notice appeared in the *Denison Daily News* announcing that "citizens who believe in the protection of the Rights of Man" would soon be invited to help establish a new club.[11] Two weeks later, on Sunday afternoon, July 11, 1880, a group of men that almost certainly included both T. V. Munson and B. C. Murray, gathered in the Main Street office of Harrison Tone, one of the town's earliest and most respected residents, for the purpose of organizing a local society along the lines of the National Liberal League, of which the famous "Great Agnostic," Robert G. Ingersoll, was then president.[12] Three days later the *Daily News* reported the group's proposed "Platform of Principles," which called for strict interpretation of the religious separation clause in the First Amendment. The group also took the bold step of coming out in support of equal rights of all citizens "regardless of creed, nationality, race or sex."[13]

Some Denisonians saw the proposed society's manifesto as "another cunningly disguised blow at the Christian religion" and warned "those who would lift their sacrilegious hands against our Divine Religion to desist."[14] Replying to a critic who failed to see how any law compelled anyone "to observe religious forms," one of several grievances enumerated in the organization's charter, Herman Kuehn, a club member and former city clerk turned wholesale grocer, pointed out "that there are laws now enforced which compel many people to remain idle on the first day of the week because it is regarded as a religious holiday" and asked, "Is this not forcing a religious ceremony on many who do not regard the first day of the week with any religious concern?" Kuehn also defended the group's call for an end to chaplains being paid from the public treasury by saying: "The church is the place for prayer; a legislative hall is for another purpose entirely. We believe in protecting both. We believe in keeping them apart."[15]

On Sunday, August 1, the League presented its first public lecture at Dunn's Hall, where the featured speaker was newly-elected president Dr. Alexander H. Morrison, who promised listeners that "no cyclones or hurricanes would result from the workings of the organization, notwithstanding the doleful fears of some of the timid Christians." The following Wednesday, in a report on the organization's activities, *Daily News* editor B. C. Murray assured uneasy readers that it was "a mistaken idea that the League was brought into existence for the purpose of opposing the Christian religion"[16] even though the group's manifesto made it plain that members would not refrain from subjecting its tenets to critical scrutiny.

The following week the featured speaker was Herman Kuehn, who posed the question "Is Rationalism Gloomier than Belief?" During his presentation Kuehn "contrasted the difference between Faith and Hope and showed conclusively that a true man could live a noble life of morality, charity and love without it." He also "paid high tribute to the memory of Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Ethan Allen, Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, who were all eminent free

The interior of B. C. Murray's printing plant was where his newspapers and pamphlets publicizing freethinking were produced.

thinkers and patriots." After "a vote of thanks was tendered to him for his admirable address" the floor was turned over to attendees for discussion. Although his remarks went unrecorded, T. V. Munson was among those who reportedly expressed an opinion.[17]

Although the Liberal League consistently disavowed any antipathy toward the Christian religion, retorts such as "Christ has had as good a show as any man," which editor Murray printed in the *Denison Daily News* after the Sherman *Democrat* criticized the group for allegedly "traducing the Christ," must have made denials seem disingenuous.[18] Twenty-five-year-old music teacher George B. Montcalm's anti-Catholic lecture, "The Opportunity of a Thousand Years," delivered on August 15, 1880, to a large audience that included "a large sprinkling of Catholics," "a minister of the gospel" and "two or three ladies" must likewise have led to doubts about the veracity of any disavowals.[19]

Murray, who was vice president of the Liberal League as well as owner and editor of the *Daily News*, almost certainly agreed with the "sweeping charges" that Montcalm made "against the Romish church." If anyone was unaware of the "infidelity" of B. C. Murray they were simply not paying attention. *The Daily News* and its successor, the *Sunday Gazetteer,* routinely carried advertisements for "infidel" publications as well as complete speeches of Robert G. Ingersoll, which often took up three or four full-length columns. Murray likewise reported the activities of other "infidel" publishers, lecturers and organizations that were unlikely to be accorded much space, if any, by most other papers.

Among other things, Montcalm's thesis included declarations that "Catholicism insists that blind faith is superior to reason" and "that mysteries are of more importance than facts." Condemning the Church for not only holding herself out "to be the sole interpreter of nature and revelation" but also "the supreme arbiter of knowledge," the young teacher characterized the Catholic establishment as one that "summarily rejects all modern criticism of the scriptures" while avowing "her hatred of free institutions and constitutional systems."[20] Unfortunately, as Mur-

ray reported, Montcalm was either unwilling or unable to defend his thesis after "Mr. Adams of the First national bank," who Murray described as "an intelligent member of the Catholic church," was allowed to take the podium for a well-delivered and apparently well-prepared rebuttal.[21] But the matter did not rest there. After Adams had seemingly destroyed "Professor" Montcalm's arguments, T.V. Munson was allowed to speak. Regrettably, his precise words went unrecorded but after he "defined his notion of God from a liberal standpoint." Murray declared that although Adams and Munson seemed "evenly matched" in terms of intellectual ability, he "thought Munson's God the most logical of the two." The editor concluded by remarking that no speaker had been arranged for the next meeting but that "Mr. Munson has been invited and will probably deliver an address."[22]

Owing to illness, Munson was unable to accept the invitation until two weeks later, when he presented a lecture entitled "A Few Thoughts on the Moral Aspects of Evolution."[23] Unfortunately, there are no surviving copies of the issue of the Denison *Daily News* (September 1, 1880) in which a report of his remarks, which editor Murray predicted would attract a large audience, was almost certainly included. In fact, it appears there are no extant issues of the *Daily News* at all from September 1880 through April 1883, the period during which the Denison Liberal League apparently disbanded. Nevertheless, Munson's thoughts regarding evolution have been preserved in a series of articles that were published in Murray's *Sunday Gazetteer* in 1883. Whether or not they contain the very same opinions he expressed three years earlier is uncertain but it seems likely.

The 1883 articles are especially noteworthy for three reasons. First of all, not only are they supportive of Darwin's Theory of Evolution, they are also openly critical of religion. Secondly, so far as known, they are among the first such writings that Munson intended for publication. Finally, and not surprisingly, they created some controversy, resulting in an extended duel of words between the "infidel" grape-grower and a local religious leader.

The battle began on October 14, 1883, when *Sunday Gazetteer* editor Murray criticized Elder A. B. Smith's review of Reverend Henry Ward Beecher's Cooper Union lecture on evolution, in which the celebrated New England clergyman had argued that Darwin's theory was not incompatible with belief in God. Both the lecture and Smith's review had been published in the *Denison Herald-News*.[24] When Smith replied, Murray not only printed the cleric's retort and his own comments in the *Sunday Gazetteer* but also an article entitled "Materialism vs. Substantialism," which by sheer coincidence Volney Munson had written and "handed in before we received Mr. Smith's manuscript."[25]

Munson's article, which did not specifically address the topic of evolution and was therefore unintended as a reply to Smith, argued that a theory called "Substantialism," advanced by "A. Wilford Hall, Ph.D., of New York" in a book entitled *The Problem of Human Life*, was defective. Hall, reported Munson, held that "sound is not produced by a wave in the air or other matter striking upon the hearing organs, but that it is a true, indestructible substance emanating and being given off by some other substance and passing through matter as a medium, and entering our sensorium, the mind, soul or spirit, as you please, through the door of the ear, like a messenger to tell us what is taking place outside."[26]

After pointing to flaws in Hall's theory, Munson went on to criticize spiritualists and Christians as well, for also believing in things that could not be demonstrably proven.

In a subsequent article entitled "Evolution" Munson left no doubt where he stood in the battle between science and religion. Darwin's theory, he wrote in language that resembles the arguments of modern-day anti-theists such as English biologist Richard Dawkins, "is simply a plan proposed by which to explain or harmonize or classify the infinite changes in nature, and is only a common sense method of accounting for all we see and know." Consequently, he added,

it "is opposed to another theory—the creative—which explains by saying that all things came by a creative act of a being apart and above matter."[27] Going further, he wrote:

> The creative theory ignores these observations. It says "Your eyes deceive you." (Thus unconsciously blaspheming the Creator, if there be such, for God must have created lying eyes if this be true—only to curse them—just as in ancient times He hardened certain people's hearts in order to destroy them.)[28]

The very same issue of the *Sunday Gazetteer* also carried a letter to the editor from Munson, in which he not only defended the stand he had taken in his earlier article "Materialism vs. Substantialism," the one that Elder Smith and "another entire stranger, Elder Jones," had both attacked in the pages of the *Herald-News*, but also challenged the two men, writing "Gentlemen, if you are spoiling for a fight…I most respectfully say, Come on."[29]

Not to be outdone, Smith accepted the dare and on November 4, a response appeared in the *Sunday Gazetteer* in which he gave his reasons for disbelieving in evolution and challenged Munson to explain, if there was no creator, "how Evolutionists account for the origin of man."[30]

The following week, in reply to Smith's article, Munson came out swinging. Calling attention to Smith's citation of "some apparent discrepancies in the writings of" scientists such as "Darwin, Haeckel, etc." he wrote: "To this Elder, I say, look out for your own glass house. Let Christians agree among themselves one-tenth as harmoniously as do scientists and let them present a mere tithe of the facts to support of Revelation as do scientists in support of even the theory of Evolution, and then they can with some degree of consistency call on Evolutionists of the conglomerate school of Beecher to profess faith in the mythological doctrines of Moses, Christ, Paul, St. John the Baptiste, the Revelationist, Constantine & Co." In conclusion, the frustrated botanist told Smith, "I must now positively decline further pursuit after you, vainly endeavoring to bring you to bay face to face with Evolution itself." [31]

A week later, Smith was back in print, this time to "defend…the cause of Christianity as taught in the volume of divine inspiration, irrespective of creeds, councils, or general assemblies, and if there is any one who doesn't like that position they will please show me a more excellent way."[32]

On December 16, when the first chapter of a three-part treatise on evolution by Volney Munson appeared in the *Sunday Gazetteer*, apparently as a follow-up to his weeks-long battle with Smith, the "infidel" grape grower may have initially surprised his readers, religious and non-religious alike, by asserting that even the world's religions were a product of evolution. Then he launched into a lengthy scientific explanation of the nature of matter, declaring unequivocally that "evolution is the individualization of matter" by natural processes requiring neither creator nor "miraculous creation,"[33] Munson finished by assuring his readers:

> What I write or speak is by no means meant or in any way desired to weaken or unhinge any faith or opinion, for if I were mean enough to do so I am thoroughly convinced by all my observations of controversy that it would tend rather to the contrary. I only try to follow the scriptural injunction, to give a reason for the faith (opinion), within me, as my personal defence, when needlessly attacked by the Jones, Smith & Co. party, who want everybody else to believe as they do.[34]

The second installment of Munson's three-part evolution essay appeared in the *Sunday Gazetteer* two days before Christmas, 1883. Focusing first on the "Moral Development of Society," the distinguished nurseryman opined, among other things, that doctors were of more use to society than ministers, adding that it would be better for churches to be used as places where people could learn about "anatomy, physiology, and hygiene, accompanied with lectures on personal morality and happiness."[35]

Although best known as a viticulturalist who helped saved the French wine industry, Thomas Volney Munson was an outspoken "infidel."

In this second chapter Munson also recalled his own personal evolution from a "little puling babe" into a "lubberly boy, then into gawky young man, full of sentimentality, religion, and love for the girls." But then, after "babies and business came," the young husband and father discovered that praying "didn't bring pancakes nor church-going clothes, bread or home." He began to have doubts, which led to "wrangles between members and churches of other creeds." The nursery business, he wrote, "required knowledge of earth, water and air to make it successful, so life could be sustained by converting the crude elements into its necessaries, so that support had not to be begged from others." This knowledge, he added, "revealed many undeniable facts not made by man, in direct opposition to the fundamental declarations of his former creed, the Bible" and in contrast to "the facts of nature [that] stood up boldly each day" no one was able "to demonstrate the Bible to be as it claimed." "Thus faith," he concluded, "became useless, and per-force today, T.V. Munson is an infidel, in the full and true sense of the term."[36]

In the December 30, 1883, issue of the *Sunday Gazetteer*, Munson concluded his lengthy treatise by addressing the commonly-held notion that non-believers were incapable of moral behavior, explaining how human morality was likewise a product of evolution or what he termed "the law of necessity."[37] He closed by thanking the editor and "my readers" and wished them all "a Happy New Year" as well as "a long rest from religious discussion." But this was hardly the last of Munson's writing for publication. In point of fact he was just getting started.

The same year in which Munson's essays about evolution appeared in his hometown newspaper, a former Methodist minister named J. D. (James Dickson) Shaw began publishing the *Independent Pulpit,* a monthly twenty-four-page freethought newspaper, available by subscription for $1.50 annually. In short order the Waco-based publication became one of the nation's best-known and most widely circulated "infidel" forums.

Volney Munson was almost certainly one of the *Independent Pulpit's* first subscribers. The following year he became a regular contributor. Between 1884 and 1892 Shaw published no fewer than seventeen articles authored by the "infidel" grape-grower, who always wrote under his own name rather than his initials or a pseudonym, which many other contributors did, apparently to hide their identities. Some of Munson's pieces took up only a column or two. Others were so lengthy that they spanned multiple issues. During this same period Shaw frequently mentioned Munson by name in his own writing.

The Denison viticulturist's very first piece written expressly for the *Independent Pulpit* appeared in the October 1884 issue under the provocative title "What is God? A name, nothing more." In his response to contributor George D. Powell's earlier article, which had posed the question, Munson left no room for doubt that far from "struggling" to answer it, as the authors of *Grape Man* suggest he was doing as late as 1906,

more than twenty years earlier he had reached a definite conclusion. "To a logical, thinking, honest mind," Munson observed, "be it in or out of 'church,' the personal God must be abandoned, just as it was in the writer's case after being a zealous Christian for many years." Making his position crystal clear he added: "What then? Simply, 'there is no God'… as claimed in the Bible."[38]

Munson's second piece for the *Independent Pulpit* addressed the controversial issue of Spiritualism, a philosophy that appealed to people such as a contributor identified as "T.Y. K.," who rejected conventional religion but retained belief in an ambiguous "spiritual" realm of some kind. Munson, a Materialist, made it perfectly clear where he stood. Directly addressing "T. Y. K.," whose article on the subject had appeared in an earlier issue, the skeptical horticulturalist challenged him to "go forth, like a true scientist, and substantiate his assertions by experiment and demonstration." In conclusion, he railed: "Let this dastard hybrid, modern "Spiritualism," either give genuine scientific demonstration, or die the death of error."[39]

In the spring of 1886, the same year Munson and his family moved from their farm on the Red River so that he could start a plant nursery on the west side of Denison, he began his third contribution to the *Independent Pulpit* by referencing a personal letter sent to him by a young man identified only as "G. E. H." and then following up with a letter he had written in response.

It appears that the young man, most likely a recent college graduate, had journeyed to Denison to ask Munson for a job. Unfortunately, the hospitable nurseryman had no position to offer him but took time for conversation in which he stunned his deeply religious visitor by sharing his unorthodox opinions and recollecting that it was during his own college days that he had begun to question the church's teachings. In a letter G. E. H. afterward wrote to Munson, he expressed his deep concern and also his astonishment "that a man in the Nineteenth century should deny that Christ was the Son of God!" calling on the older man to reconsider. "Don't persuade yourself to believe that any longer," he implored. "Stop short; go back to where you were when you were that young man and get your faith, for without faith we can do nothing." He closed by pleading, "Mr. Munson, make one more effort to gain that heaven not made with hands and enjoy this life and the one to come."[40]

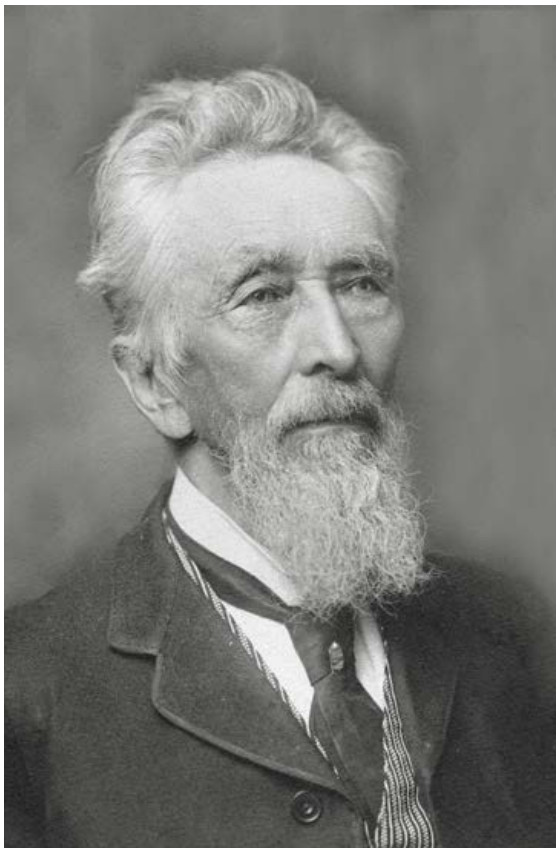
In his polite but unrepentant reply, Munson complimented his correspondent, calling him "an excellent young man" but chided him as well, saying that he still had a lot to learn "concerning thought and the right of individual opinion." He also challenged his concerned correspondent to earnestly pray that he (Munson) might actually be shown "God, and the devil, Christ at God's right hand in heaven…and all his angels," and if this prayer is answered, he wrote, then "you will save a true, noble soul from hell," adding: "I want no foolishness. I mean business, and here is a chance for you to demonstrate according to the promise of Christ." He then remarked: "But you will never do it. God cannot do it. None of these things will I ever see, only in imagination." In conclusion, Munson advised his young correspondent to give up "old opinions when you acquire facts which give you foundation for better ones," adding: "Be a man and think, rather than be scared to death by faith."[41]

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, J. E. (John Eleazer) Remsburg, often called "a 'second Ingersoll' in oratory,"[42] was one of the most sought-after Freethought lecturers in the United States. He was also a prolific writer of more than a dozen books critical of religion. On April 15, 1886, Remsburg set out from his home in Atchison, Kansas, for an extensive tour of Texas, which received coverage in D. M. Bennett's nationally-circulated "infidel" publication *The Truth Seeker* as well as J. D. Shaw's *The Independent Pulpit*. His first stop was Denison, where on Friday evening, April 16, thanks to "the indefatigable effort of B. C. Murray the large opera house was nearly filled with Denison's best citizens. Sherman also sent a delegation."[43] There can be little doubt that unless he was ill or away on business, Volney Munson was in "the large audience of ladies and

gentlemen" who came to hear the speaker defend the memory of Thomas Paine, "The Apostle of Liberty." Afterward, Remsburg praised not only Murray, calling him "a thoroughly posted Freethinker, and an able writer," but also the *Sunday Gazetteer,* saying "though nominally a secular paper, no Liberal journal in the country is more outspoken in its opposition to priestcraft."[44]

Although Denisonians almost always welcomed the chance to hear a visiting lecturer like Remsberg, such opportunities were clearly too infrequent for people like Volney Munson. On Sunday morning, March 3, 1889, "a number of citizens" that felt "the want of some kind of social organization" gathered in King's Hall to hear the distinguished nurseryman express his "Thoughts on organizing a Moral Science club." The following Sunday, March 10, the Denison Philosophical and Social Club was formed, with Munson as president and B. C. Murray, secretary. Although its leaders were non-religious, the "infidel" grapegrower had made it clear in his remarks on March 3 that he was not proposing a club just for freethinkers but for anyone who thirsted after knowledge (although the society's regular meeting time, Sunday at 10:30 A.M., was bound to exclude all or most of Denison's devoutly religious citizens, who would almost certainly be in church at that time).

Munson was true to his word. Although many of the free-to-the-public lectures were concerned with religious or philosophical issues, all sorts of topics were welcome. One speaker lectured about Native American Mound Builders. Another time Munson gave a lecture in which he "took the position that the earth's atmosphere must necessarily assume the form of a tail on the side opposite to its course in orbit…and that it was the reflection of sunlight through this elongated atmosphere, and cosmic dust held in suspension, that gives us the appearance known as zodiacal light."[45] For an entire week in February 1890 the club permitted an Edison phonograph "or talking machine" to be exhibited in its regular meeting room and on June 8 that same year Professor R.T. Hill of the State Geological Survey gave a presentation on "an economic subject."[46]



B. C. Murray served as secretary of the Denison Philosophical and Social Club when it was organized in 1889.

Despite Munson's insistence that the purpose of the Denison Philosophical and Social Club was simply "to encourage the expression of opinion—in a friendly, progressive spirit, of all manner of views, that no light be lost,"[47] apparently some Denisonians were unconvinced. On June 23, 1889, the *Sunday Gazetteer* published a letter from a reader identified as "Member of the Bar," who took particular exception to some comments the society's president had made in an earlier issue, in which he had declared:

> We believe there is a growing demand in every community for such an organization as this, even in places where every one is a church member, for no church permits indiscriminate expression of honest opinion to be compared and weighed by its mem-

> bers upon a rational standard, and yet every person who loves truth delights in comparing diverse friendly opinion for the truth's sake.[48]

In conclusion, Munson had added, "there is only one great church, the church of humanity; and likewise one great external religion—that of rationalism."[49]

When "Member of the Bar" declared "this doctrine [i.e., a church of humanity] has been taught by the Christian church for eighteen centuries" and demanded to know "what kind of rationalism" did "the gentleman mean,"[50] Munson was quick to respond. In a letter that appeared in the June 30, 1889, issue of the *Sunday Gazetteer*, he first took "Member of the Bar" to task for "bushwhacking" him from "behind the bar" and under cover of a pseudonym. After assuring readers that his previous remarks had "not been prepared as a challenge to discussion, but merely to arouse interest in the Philosophical and Social Club of this city," the unapologetic grape-grower declared his "dissent from 'M. of B.'s' assertion" and demanded "his proof." To support his own avowal, Munson cited "the passage of Christian teaching, 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall not be saved.'" Referring to the statistical fact that "the overwhelmingly majority of mankind *do not believe* [in Christianity], and hence must be dammed," Munson concluded that the Christian church and the church of humanity "are remarkably distinct."[51]

On Sunday, March 2, 1890, the Denison Philosophical and Social Club hosted the return of Kansas freethought lecturer John E. Remsburg, who spoke twice. "His lectures were entertaining, logical, and instructive," reported Murray, adding: "The hall was crowded and every one gave close attention." A week later, on Sunday, March 10, *Independent Pulpit* publisher J. D. Shaw arrived to help club members celebrate their first anniversary by presenting a lecture entitled "The Aims and Methods of Liberalism," which according to Murray, the Waco freethinker "handled…in a pleasing and logical manner." Following Shaw's address, there was a business meeting at which Munson was re-elected president.[52]

Robert G. Ingersoll, the Great Agnostic, spoke in Denison in February 1898.

Although it appears no membership roster of the Denison Philosophical and Social Club has survived to the present day, a short article in the November 1889 issue of the *Independent Pulpit* revealed that in addition to B. C. Murray and Volney Munson, the city's "infidels" included Munson brother J. T. as well as "J. E. Ficklin, R. M. King, R. C. Collins, Jno. Haven, Judge J. Linley, Judge Nathaniel Decker, L. Gilmore, Sr., Z. P. Stoneman, Judge J. M. Cook, Louis Decker, and Dr. Alex Morrison."[53]

In the summer of 1890, at J. D. Shaw's urging, a number of the most prominent "infidels" in Texas gathered in Waco to organize a state-level Liberal League. An earlier effort, in 1883 and also spearheaded by Shaw, had been short-lived. On this occasion the delegates met for three days—July 15-17, 1890. Among the first day's attendees (forty-seven altogether) was Volney Munson, who was elected to preside over the convention. The following day, after several more per-

Following Munson's death, Charles H. Jones carried on the crusade. His name is prominently displayed in the side of his furniture store in this early twentieth-century postcard of Denison, Texas.

sons arrived, "The Liberal Association of Texas" was formally organized. The group's purposes, as outlined in its second resolution of the day, were to "encourage the study of man in all his relations," to "seek to realize the truth in life," to "aid in those movements that tend most to the improvement of the individual and society and to the unity and freedom of mankind," to "facilitate the association of those who have at heart and hold dear that absolute freedom of thought and expression which is the natural right of every human being," and to "inaugurate a system of positive, tolerant thought, ethical culture and practical benevolence, in which all liberal-minded people can unite and work in harmony for the moral elevation, intellectual improvement, social well-being and consequent happiness of the human race." Following the adoption of four more resolutions, the "seventy-nine delegates from twenty-three counties" elected J. D. Shaw, President, J. L. Jackson, Secretary, and Volney Munson, Treasurer for the following year. In addition, a fund totaling $300 was raised.[54]

In a further report of the Waco meeting, Shaw opined, "Mr. T.V. Munson proved to be the right man in the right place at the right time, as our first presiding officer. It was on July 15th, with him in the chair, that Texas Liberalism began to take on organic form. We feel sure that that part of his life will be recorded in history and none of his ancestors [did he mean descendants?] will be ashamed of it." Shaw also pointed out that Munson, who had "the style of a philosopher," was one of the seven principal speakers at the convention. [55]

Volney Munson and *Sunday Gazetteer* editor Murray both attended the second meeting of the Texas Liberal Association, held in San Antonio, April 10-12, 1891. This time Judge J. P. Richardson of Austin was elected President, A. L. Teagarden, also of Austin, was chosen Secretary, with Munson to continue as Treasurer of an organization that by this time had grown to 525 members.[56]

The third meeting of the Texas Liberal Association, with 600 members on the roll (but not all in attendance), was held in Waco, April 8-10, 1892, when Munson was replaced as treasurer by R. W. Park. Although a writer for the *Truth Seeker* declared that "Texas is one of the most promising states in the Union for Freethought" (and named Volney Munson as one of its leading lights), following its fourth meeting, which was held in Austin, May 1-3, 1893,[57] the group apparently disbanded. There seems to be no record of why, not even in the pages of Shaw's *Independent Pulpit*, nor does there appear to be any record of why the Denison Philosophical and Social Society, which had been led by Volney Munson since its inception, also suddenly and mysteriously broke up sometime in 1893.

In 1896 John E. Remsburg made a second tour of Texas. As before, his first stop was Denison, where on Tuesday, April 7 he delivered a lecture entitled "The Demands of Liberalism" at the McDougall Opera House. The following evening, his topic was "False Claims of the Church." It seems likely that Volney Munson and his brothers were present on one or both occasions. Later that same year the "infidel" grape-grower himself spoke in Dallas, where on the evening of Sunday, October 18, he presented a lecture entitled "The Superiority of Natural over Supernatural Moral Codes" to the Dallas Freethinkers Association.[58]

In 1898 the celebrated "Great Agnostic," Robert G. Ingersoll, also made a tour of Texas. On Thursday, February 10, he spoke at Denison's Opera House, the same venue where Remsburg had appeared. As at most of his other stops, which included Dallas and other large cities, his topic was "Why I Am an Agnostic." Unless he was ill or away from home on business, it is a near certainty that Volney Munson was in the audience and may even have met the great man before or after his appearance. Two days later editor Murray devoted nearly an entire page of the *Sunday Gazetteer* to Ingersoll's speech.[59]

By the turn of the twentieth century, it was evident that the Freethought movement in the United States, of which Ingersoll was the undisputed national leader and Volney Munson an important voice in Texas, had gained some ground. "Serious" declines in church membership were reported in several newspapers of the period, resulting in a redoubling of the efforts of clergymen to hang on to their dwindling flocks.[60]

The arrival of the twentieth century also appears to have signaled a decline in the freethinking nurseryman's writing output, more likely due to the demands of his business and civic interests rather than advancing age. Certainly there is no indication that his anti-theistic opinions ever changed. In 1904 a short article appeared in the *Blue Grass Blade*, one of the country's leading "infidel" publications, which has all the earmarks of a Munson essay. Only the use of a pseudonym, "Theophilus," something he had never done in the past, is uncharacteristic of the man.[61] There is no question however that he was a subscriber. In 1906 Munson wrote a letter to the editor, under his own name, praising the *Blade* as one of the country's "best periodicals of advanced thought."[62] He wrote again in 1909, commending the editor for his "great strides in improvement of the *Blade* during the past two years" and promising "to keep up my subscription to it so long as it continues on the upward course."[63] Another letter to the editor of the *Blade*, written by son-in-law Alexander A. Acheson, confirms that he and his wife Fern were likewise "infidels."[64] So too was Volney's less outspoken brother J. T. as well as brother Ben, whose only known "infidel" writing is a poem, "All Matter Alive," which was published in the October 1890 issue of the *Independent Pulpit*.[65] Whether wife Ellen or any of the couple's other children also shared the outspoken nurseryman's opinions is uncertain.

Owing to a dearth of extant copies of the *Independent Pulpit* after 1892, it is difficult to ascertain how many more articles Munson may have written for that particular paper but it is certain that from time to time he contributed to its successor, *The Searchlight,* also edited by J. D. Shaw, during the first decade of the twentieth century.[66] He also lectured in a very unlikely place, the "pulpit of the Christian church at the Cotton Mill,"

where the decidedly unconverted professor held forth on scientific topics such as "The Creation of the World."[67]

In the most recent Munson biography, *Grape Man*, authors Renfro and McLeRoy reveal that when the aging botanist was sixty-three-years-old, he wrote a thirty-three page pamphlet under the pseudonym "Theophilus Philosophius." In this now-scarce work, published in an apparently limited run in 1906 by B. C. Murray and entitled *The New Revelation*, the celebrated grape-grower made it abundantly clear that he did not believe in the God of the Bible, which certainly made him an atheist insofar as Christianity was concerned. Although there is no evidence that he ever labeled himself a Pantheist, akin to Spinoza or Einstein, Munson conceded: "If you must call nature God, then I am a son of God."[68]

Describing *The New Revelation* as "enlightening, mystifying, and sad by turns," the authors of *Grape Man* concluded that Munson, after forty years, was still "struggling with the nature of God and religion" and wrote the pamphlet "perhaps… to convince himself as much as others." Whether this misunderstanding of their subject's religious views stems from unfamiliarity with freethought literature of the period or a reluctance to accept that their man was precisely what he said he was, namely an "infidel," brings to mind the old story about a devoutly religious temperance league woman who when reminded that Jesus drank wine, replied, "Yes, but I wish he hadn't!" Today, only a few copies of Munson's anonymous pamphlet are known to exist (apparently, his wish that 10,000 be posthumously printed and distributed to clergymen across the country seems to have gone unfulfilled).

On Tuesday, January 21, 1913, Volney Munson died of pneumonia at his home, "Vinita," surrounded by his family. He was sixty-nine years of age. His funeral service, held two days later at Denison's XXI Club, a building that his brother J. T. had built and donated for use as a ladies club, was "brief and simple" and decidedly secular in nature. No clergyman officiated. Instead, "R. S. Legate, a warm personal friend of the deceased, read the funeral oration, which was written by Mr. Munson himself, several years ago."[69]

The oration, which had been included in "The New Revelation," gave Munson a posthumous opportunity to take one last swipe at revealed religion. "In matters of belief, in ancient religious dogmas," he had written, "my reason outran my faith, and made me happier." Consequently, he added, "I have recommended knowledge as the only key that can open a broader, higher, and brighter heaven to man than in any faith." In conclusion, he declared, "If you must call Nature God, then I am a son of God, and you are all my brothers and sisters, and you must also be sons and daughters of God. In this sense was Jesus a Son of God, and in no other, and in this sense he is our elder Brother." Following the service, Munson was laid to rest in the family plot at Fairview Cemetery, where his brother Ben read a final farewell over his grave. [70] Later, a distinctive unique monument wreathed in grapevines was erected at the site.

Six months after Munson's death his old friend and fellow "infidel," B. C. Murray sold his newspapers, the *Denison News* and the *Sunday Gazetteer*. After a retirement that lasted a little more than ten years later, he died in Denison on Wednesday, February 6, 1924, at the age of eighty-seven. The following day he was likewise interred at Fairview Cemetery.[71]

Almost immediately following the death of Volney Munson and the retirement of B. C. Murray, a successful Denison furniture dealer and real estate agent named Charles H. Jones became the city's most visible "infidel." Whether he had been personally acquainted with the celebrated grape-man or with any of the city's older atheists is uncertain but it seems likely in view of the fact that they were all active in business and community affairs in the same era.

Although Munson and Jones shared the same opinions regarding religion, unlike the celebrated nurseryman, Jones was unknown outside of Denison and while it is likely that during the years when his furniture store was the city's largest almost everyone in town knew his name, today

he seems to be a forgotten man, despite the fact that a park on the south side of the city bears his surname and a charitable trust, established by his widow, continues to help fund the Denison public library to the present day.

Jones was forty years old in 1902, when he married the slightly younger Minnie M. Marsh, an exceptionally well-educated young woman who had been a teacher and principal in the Denison schools and an English and American literature instructor at North Texas Normal College. Miss Marsh was also an occasional writer of short articles and had already gained some fame as an orator. Her father, Julian P. Marsh, ran a successful shoe store in Denison.

In a private letter written in 1914 Jones mentioned that his parents and his brothers and sisters were Christians but said nothing about his wife and daughter Janis being religious, which suggests that they shared his opinions.

That same year the outspoken businessman began writing letters to the editors of both the *Denison Daily Herald* and the *Denison Gazette*, in which he voiced his opinions regarding a variety of topics, including religion. Although he made it clear that he had no use for any religion, he was particularly critical of the Bible and Christianity. Many of his letters were published. During this same period Jones also authored twenty-four paid "advertisements" in the *Gazette* and *Herald*. In actuality these "advertisements" were editorials that gave him the opportunity to give vent to his strong anti-religious opinions.

Some of the titles provide a glimpse of the issues that concerned the writer: "Is it a Fact that Christianity is the Hope of the Nation?" (Jones emphatically said "no"); "Is Christianity Opposed to Free Speech?"; "The Talking Snake in the Garden of Eden"; "Are Prayers Answered? Nobody Can Prove That They Are"; "Is the Bible Inspired Concerning Women?"

Jones also kept a close watch on news of a religious nature. He even attended church services from time-to-time, apparently for the express purpose of listening to sermons that he afterward rebutted in his newspaper articles. One sermon delivered by the Reverend J. E. Aubrey of Denison's First Presbyterian Church provided Jones with material for five consecutive articles published in November 1916. Not surprisingly, these essays attracted the attention of area Christians, some of whom sent polite but concerned personal letters to the headstrong furniture man, informing him that he was on the wrong path if he did not let God and Jesus into his life. None of these mostly anonymous letters had the desired effect. Whenever the correspondent was bold enough to sign his or her name, Jones usually composed a reply.

Like Munson, Murray, and other Denison "infidels," Jones was a materialist who based his opinions on the premise that none of Christianity's claims could be proven. Unlike his religious peers who relied on faith to justify their belief, Jones demanded evidence. In the third of his replies to Reverend Aubrey's sermon, he wrote:

> Belief in a thing is not proof that the thing exists. Belief in witches does not prove witches. If belief proved a thing to be true, then the beliefs of the Buddhists, and dozens of other religious beliefs would all be proved to be true.
>
> Christians deny that other religious beliefs are true. They say that only their belief is true and then the Protestants and the Roman Catholics deny that each other teaches the correct Christian belief. It certainly is right puzzling to an uninspired person…[72]

Jones was also exceptionally familiar with Biblical scripture. In his articles he often pointed out contradictory Bible verses or those that seemed to make no sense. He likewise expressed his opinion regarding civic issues, some of which were related to religion and some that were not. He adamantly opposed tax exemptions for church parsonages and any so-called "Sunday laws" or "blue laws," such as a ban on Sunday baseball and movie theater closures on Sunday. He also opposed curfews for young people as well as a proposal to turn Denison's Main Street into a "Great White Way"

through what he deemed to be excessive after-business-hours illumination. He favored mail delivery on Sunday.

Jones' religious opinions also determined which civic enterprises he supported. When the local YMCA unveiled plans to build a new building in Denison, he refused the group any help on account of its connections to Christianity. Yet during the First World War he became chief fund raiser of the Denison branch of the American Red Cross, which despite its name and emblem is not a religious charity. From all appearances, it was a job Jones took seriously and pursued with due diligence.

In 1924, while vacationing in Dallas with his wife and daughter, Jones contracted pneumonia while staying at the Stoneleigh Hotel, where he unexpectedly died on Friday, March 14. That afternoon, an Interurban railway car transported Jones' remains, along with his grieving widow and daughter, to Denison.[73]

On Sunday, March 16, 1924, a simple, non-religious funeral, attended by some of the town's most prominent citizens, including businessman and fellow "infidel" W. B. "Ben" Munson, bank president P. J. Brennan, and attorney J. H. Randell, was held in the Jones family home where his widow read a eulogy, printed in its entirety in the *Denison Daily Herald*, in which she recollected her late husband's "pronounced anti-religious views."[74] Afterward, he was buried at Fairview Cemetery.

On August 7, 1947, Minnie Marsh Jones, who outlived her husband by nearly thirty years, donated one square block of land, bordered by Day and Shepherd Streets and Eddy and Perry Avenues, to the city of Denison to be used as a public park, and to include a children's playground, as a memorial to the couple's daughter Janis, who had died in 1932.[75]

When Minnie Marsh Jones herself died on July 24, 1953, at the age of eighty-five, it was revealed that she had left the bulk of her estate, valued at $200,000, to the City of Denison, to be used "for the betterment of the citizens of Denison." Mrs. Jones also "left a downtown building to Ollie Hanning, a long-time employee, and several other gifts to Negro employees."[76] Some of the money left to the City of Denison was also used to set up the Mr. and Mrs. Chas. H. Jones Trust Fund, a charitable foundation that has provided financial support to the Denison Public Library from 1960 to the present time (2015). Thus long after his death, another one of Denison's most outspoken "infidels" continues to have a constructive impact on the community where he spent the bulk of his life. L

NOTES

[1]*Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), January 3, 1889 and *The Dallas Morning News,* February 20, 1889 (hereafter cited as *DMN*).

[2]*DMN*, June 25, 1906.

[3]Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler (1842–1922), *Denison, Grayson County, Texas 1891,* 1891. Lithograph, 20.9 x 33.5 in. Published by T. M. Fowler and James B. Moyer. Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth.

[4]*The Texas Almanac* [http://www.texasalmanac.com/sites/default/files/images/CityPopHist%20web.pdf; accessed June 7, 2014].

[5]Denison Chamber of Commerce website [http://www.denisontexas.us/pages/Demographics/; accessed June 7, 2014].

[6]Shelle Cassell, Director, Marketing & Public Information - Grayson County College, "Munson biographer receives international book award," Jan 6, 2009 [http://www.ntxe-news.com/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi?archive=30&num=50226; accessed June 28, 2014].

[7]Sherrie S. McLeRoy and Roy Renfro, Jr., *Grape Man of Texas: The Life of T. V. Munson* (Eakin Press: Austin, Texas, 2004), 15.

[8]Ibid., 130.

[9]*Galveston Weekly News*, July 22, 1878.

[10]*Daily News*, Denison, Texas, July 12, 1878.

[11]*Daily News*, Denison, Texas, June 27, 1880.

[12]*Daily News*, Denison, Texas, July 14, 1880.

[13]Ibid.

[14]*Daily News*, Denison, Texas, July 15, 1880.

[15]Ibid.

[16]*Daily News*, Denison, July 28, August 1, & August 3, 1880.

[17]*Daily News,* Denison, Texas, August 10, 1880.

[18]*Daily News*, Denison, Texas, August 13, 1880.

[19]*Daily News*, Denison, Texas, August 15, 1880.

[20]*Daily News*, Denison, Texas, August 17, 1880.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

[23]*Daily News*, Denison, Texas, August 29, 1880.

[24] *Sunday Gazetteer,* Denison, Texas, October 14, 1883.

[25] *Sunday Gazetteer,* Denison, Texas, October 21, 1883.

[26] Ibid.

[27] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, October 28, 1883.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, November 4, 1883.

[31] Sunday Gazetteer, Denison, Texas, November 11, 1883.

[32] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, December 2, 1883.

[33] *Sunday Gazetteer,* Denison, Texas, December 16, 1883.

[34] Ibid.

[35] *Sunday Gazetteer,* Denison, Texas, December 23, 1883.

[36] Ibid.

[37] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, December 30, 1883.

[38] T. V. Munson, "What is God? A Name, Nothing More," *Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, vol. 2, no. 8, October 1884, 86-7.

[39] T. V. Munson, "Spiritualistic Religion," *Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, vol. 2, no. 9, October 1884, 94.

[40] T. V. Munson, "Letter to G.E.H.," *Independent Pulpit,* Waco, Texas, vol. 4, no. 3, May 1886, 52-3.

[41] Ibid.

[42] *The Worthington Advance* (Worthington, Minnesota), August 12, 1886.

[43] *The Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, vol. 4 no. 4, June 1886, 81.

[44] Ibid.

[45] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, December 4, 1892.

[46] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, February 16 and June 8, 1890.

[47] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, June 16, 1889.

[48] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, June 16 and 23, 1889.

[49] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, June 16, 1889.

[50] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, June 23, 1889.

[51] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, June 30, 1889.

[52] *The Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, 8, no. 2 (April 1890): 46.

[53] *The Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, 7, no. 9 (November 1889): 209.

[54] *The Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, 8, no. 6 (August 1890): 135-6; Samuel P. Putnam, *400 Years of Freethought* (New York: The Truth Seeker Company, 1894), 552-3.

[55] *The Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, 8, no. 6 (August 1890): 137-8.

[56] Samuel P. Putnam, *400 Years of Freethought* (New York: The Truth Seeker Company, 1894), 553.

[57] Ibid., 553-4.

[58] *Dallas Daily Times Herald*, October 17, 1896.

[59] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, February 13, 1898.

[60] *Plain Dealer,* Cleveland Ohio, March 5, 1900; Charlotte *Observer, Charlotte*, North Carolina, April 21, 1901; *Baltimore American*, Baltimore, Ohio, November 1, 1903.

[61] "An Open Letter to St. Luke," *The Blue Grass Blade*, Lexington, Kentucky, July 10, 1904.

[62] *The Blue Grass Blade*, Lexington, Kentucky, April 15, 1906.

[63] *The Blue Grass Blade*, Lexington, Kentucky, May 23, 1909.

[64] *The Blue Grass Blade*, Lexington, Kentucky, June 26, 1904.

[65] *The Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, vol. 8 no. 8, October 1890, 170-1.

[66] *The Humanitarian Review*, Los Angeles, California, vol. 7, no. 1, whole no. 68, August 1908, 47.

[67] *Sunday Gazetteer*, Denison, Texas, July 14, 1907.

[68] Ibid., 157.

[69] *Denison Daily Herald,* Denison, Texas, January 23, 1913.

[70] Ibid.

[71] *DMN*, July 19, 1913, and February 7, 1924.

[72] Chas. H. Jones, "The Rev. J. E. Aubrey's Sermon Answered by Chas. H. Jones," *Denison Daily Herald*, Denison, Texas, November 13, 1916.

[73] *Dallas Times Herald,* March 14, 1924; *Denison Daily Herald,* Denison, Texas, March 14, 1924.

[74] *Denison Daily Herald*, Denison, Texas, March 17, 1924.

[75] *DMN*, August 8, 1947.

[76] *DMN*, December 25, 1958.

Recording Memories
A Recently Discovered Treasure

BY KERRY ADAMS

Most museums have in their collections a few "mystery" artifacts, items that seem to have been left on their doorsteps by well-intentioned donors, often without even a note or phone number. One such item in the collection of the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History and Culture is a 500-page ledger book whose cover reads, "Presented by/ John Cavet Chapter/ U.S.D. 1812," while the inside cover is inscribed, "In honor of Mrs. T. L. Westerfield, March 26, 1936." Inside are page after page of signatures, mostly single spaced. It was clearly a visitor log for the so-called John Neely Bryan Cabin, which was restored and dedicated on the southwest corner of the courthouse square in January 1936.

The John Neely Bryan Cabin was reconstructed on the south side of the Old Red Courthouse late in 1935.

Dallas County Commissioners posed in front of the cabin before dedication ceremonies on January 6, 1936.

The historians who created the museum, which opened in 2007, have explained that a number of artifacts, probably including the ledger, were found stored in the building when renovation of the structure began in 2000.[1] Research indicates that the John Cavet Chapter was connected to the United States Daughters of the War of 1812.

Nineteen-thirty-six was, of course, a pivotal year in the history of Dallas. The city had won the bid to host the Texas Centennial Exposition, and in preparation, it created a grand entry to the city and was expending millions to construct and renovate its fairground facilities. Designed by renowned landscape architects Hare and Hare, a new downtown parkway/traffic funnel was dedicated as Dealey Plaza.

Billed as the first World's Fair in the Southwest, the Centennial's theme was "history and progress." Visitors arriving from the west by car could travel east along Commerce Street. Banners flew overhead before they drove through the new Triple Underpass, past a grassy lawn complete with cast iron lamp posts and tasteful groupings of shrubbery. Eyes would have been drawn to the imposing Old Red Courthouse and, in the distance, the two-year-old Pegasus rotating atop the Magnolia Building. Stopping at the traffic light at the corner of Houston and Commerce, visitors would spot something unusual in this mod-

The interior of the cabin was furnished with an assortment of items considered appropriate for the 1840s. Note the electric light switch that powered a "lantern fashioned from a hub taken off a wagon driven to Texas by a Mr. Hollifield in 1837" (WPA Dallas Guide and History, p. 337).

ern city: a small log cabin, surrounded by a split rail fence, sitting on the corner of the courthouse lawn. The hewn log cabin physically symbolized the Centennial's message about the contrast between history and progress.

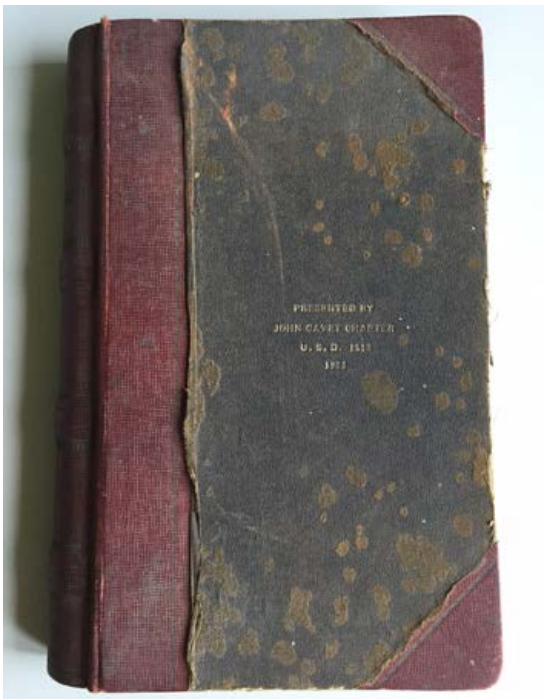
According to *The WPA Dallas Guide and History* (compiled in 1940), this particular cabin was thought to have been a portion of the dogtrot style home that was built by town founder John Neely Bryan. Originally sited on the south side of Commerce Street near Broadway (a street that no longer exists, parallel to Houston and one block west of it), it was the family's residence from 1843 to 1852. The guide listed it as one of forty-three "Points of Interest" throughout the county and offered a detailed account of its moves during the post-Civil War era: from downtown Dallas to the south shore of White Rock Lake and then to

acreage that became the Buckner Orphans home in 1880.[2] In 1935-36 Dallas County rebuilt the cabin next to Old Red at a cost of approximately $1,000.

Dedication ceremonies for the cabin were held on January 9, 1936.[3] County Judge Robert Ogden presided. Also attending were all the County Commissioners: Tom W. Field, Charles A. Tosch, Ed Vandervort, and Vernon D. Singleton. Texas Attorney General William McCraw gave the dedicatory address. *Dallas Morning News* publisher George Bannerman Dealey credited the Dallas Historical Society with the idea of bringing the cabin to the site and outlined the structure's history and significance. Herbert Gambrell, DHS curator, then assumed the role of presiding officer for the remainder of the ceremony.

The County Commissioners appointed Mrs. Thomas L. Westerfield, daughter of the late R. C. Buckner, as tour guide ("hostess" in 1930s terms) of the cabin. While the *Dallas Times Herald* account indicated that no salary was set, Mrs. Westerfield's job description was clear. She was to "be on duty at the cabin during the Centennial to explain to visitors its origins and to see that no one defaces the walls seeking souvenirs."[4]

Why a visitor guest book was not placed in the cabin until March is unknown. But beginning on March 26, and continuing for seven years (until the book was full), nearly 25,000 people signed their names. Most of the signatures were written with fountain pens. A fair amount were



The visitor log is actually a ledger common in the 1920s and '30s.

fashioned in Spencerian script, the literally "old school" handwriting style, which by the 1930s was seen as old fashioned. Periodic groupings of pencil-printed scrawls from the hands of grade-schoolers are also there. Among all of these signatures were dozens of Dallas County pioneer families who took the time to include phrases and stories about their families' experiences. Here are some of the more notable ones, in the order in which they signed the book:

- A group of students from Dallas Country Day School, including six-year-old Dicky Bass (Richard Bass, who later became the first person to climb the world's seven summits)[5]
- W. C. Walker, a great-nephew of Margaret Beeman Bryan
- Irene Ballieu and James Edwin Ballieu, great-grand niece and nephew of Margaret Beeman Bryan
- A loose paper identifies Mrs. E. C. Freeman as the granddaughter of Mabel Gilbert (a pioneer whom Bryan persuaded to move from Bird's Fort to Dallas; a former riverboat captain, Gilbert came down the Trinity on a raft.)

• A. F. Kreissig, grandson of La Reunion settler A. Cretien, and son of Hans Kreissig, founder of the Dallas Symphony Club (1900), origin of the modern Dallas Symphony Orchestra

•W. H. Hall, whose parents settled in Dallas County in 1849. His granduncle, Wormley Carter, was one of the first sheriffs of Dallas County.

•Ernest E. Clayton, San Francisco; born on the Allen farm at the corner of Forest and Ervay in 1898. His parents had a business at Ervay and Main. They witnessed the arrival of the first automobile driven into Dallas by Ned Green.

• Jesse Cox, Dallas, a second cousin of Margaret Beeman Bryan. His father, H. B. Cox, played around this house when a boy.

• Mrs. Minnie Asbury, cousin of John Neely Bryan's wife, visited the cabin when it was at the Buckner Orphans Home and was told the Bryans' first child was born in this cabin.

• L. Holifield, superintendent of the rebuilding of the cabin at the courthouse square, recalled how Rev. Buckner "treasured and appreciated" the cabin and penned a short history of the building.

• Mrs. Margaret Baker Lynn Matthis, named for cousin Margaret Beeman Bryan. "My mother Emily Beeman Baker lived in this little cabin for some time when she was a little girl."

• Lucy Trent and her husband. A relative of John Neely Bryan, she wrote a biography of him that was published in the 1930s.

• Norman A. Goede, Webb City, Missouri, husband of Bettie May Bryan, daughter of John Neely Bryan, Jr., who was born in this house in 1846

• Samuel E. Webb, Mobile, Alabama: "I am the son of William D. Webb, who was the son of Isaac Webb. I was working at C. J. Moore's Store on Houston St. the day the 3rd courthouse burned and helped remove the papers etc. out of the sheriff's office." Entry dated 8-26-1937

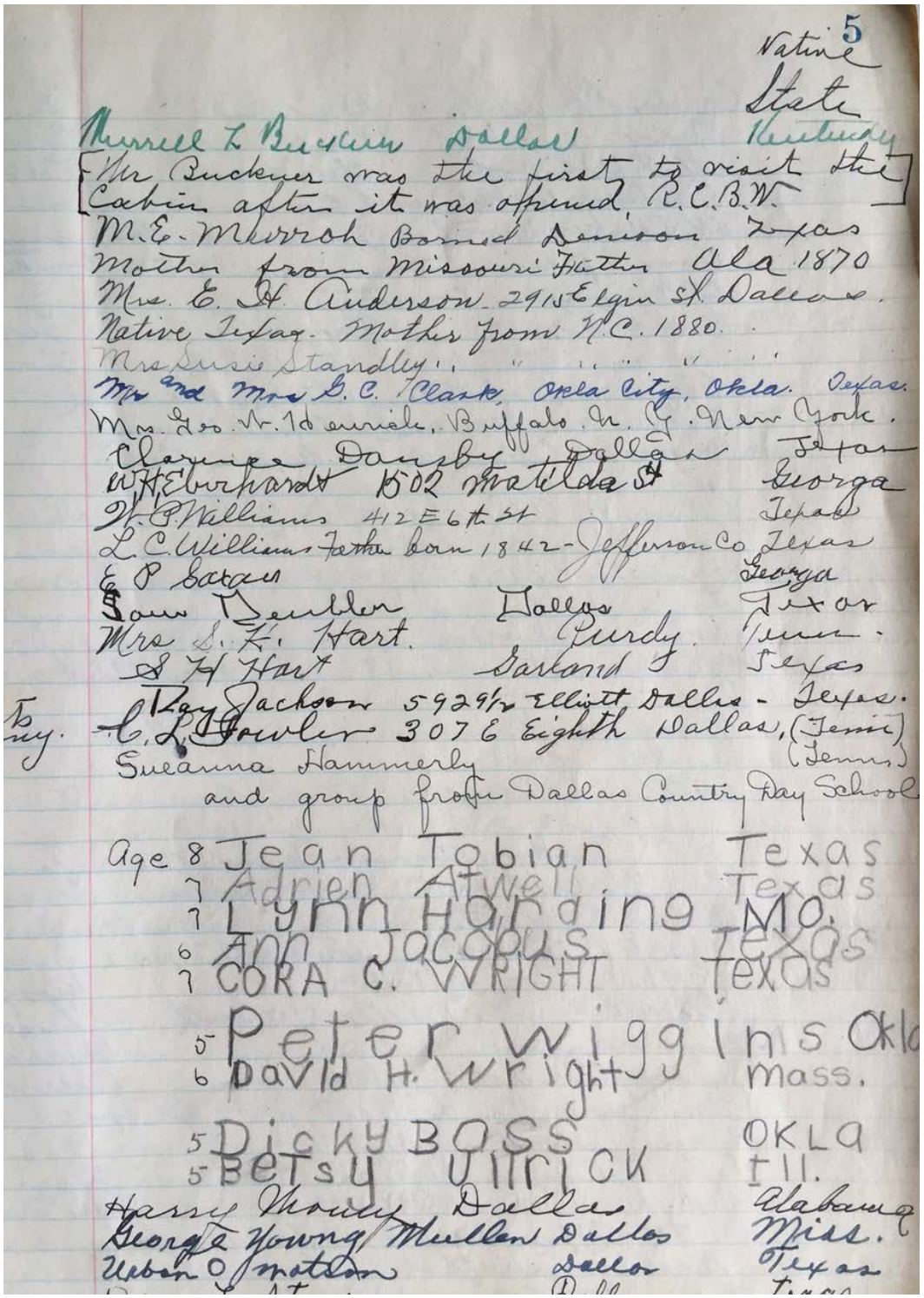
• "Sons and Daughters of Liberty" met in this cabin on the night of June 16, 1941. "It was our third meeting."

• The United States Postmaster General Frank C. Walker visited the cabin, Oct. 16, 1941.

• Benciam Wonkoff, native of Russia, with the Metropolitan Opera Company

• Lady Thompson, of Ottawa, Canada, visited the cabin in 1942.

• By 1943, a number of U.S. servicemen signed as visitors.



The first page of the visitor log records the pencil signatures of a group of first graders from Dallas Country Day School.

As they put pen to paper, it was a moment for many to connect with their own past, as they journeyed through the last chapter in their lives. Today, we realize that they also left us a gift – a record from the last generation who may have known Dallas as a pioneer town that grew into an industrialized city. In fact, several people knew the Bryan family personally.

How are internet "Tweets" and "Facebook posts" any different from these? Over the course of human history, we all have the need to leave our mark—through the children we have; the books we write; the buildings we construct and those that we painstakingly restore; the personal stories that we share. In our digital age, we may know too much about some individuals, while merely nothing of others. That is, if the information is still accessible in 2095.

As for the log cabin, it has been moved two more times, and its authenticity has been questioned. We will probably never know if a single log was actually hewn by John Neely Bryan. But nestled among trees in Founder's Plaza, the diminutive building continues to serve as a cultural touchstone whose lasting purpose just might be the juxtaposition of progress with history. L

NOTES

[1]Jackie McElhaney, Michael V. Hazel, and Sam Childers met with the author on June 30, 2015, to review the ledger and other material with unknown provenance.

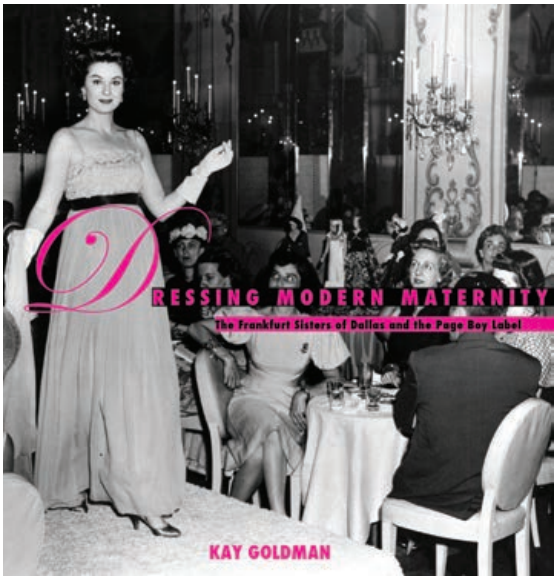
[2]*The WPA Dallas Guide and History*, edited by Maxine Holmes and Gerald D. Saxon (Dallas Public Library, Texas Center for the Book, University of North Texas Press, 1984), 337-8.

[3]*Dallas Times Herald*, January 9, 1936; *The Dallas Morning News*, January 10, 1936.

[4]*Dallas Times Herald,* January 9, 1936. The Dallas City Directory for 1936 lists "Robbie C. (wid. Thomas L.) Westerfield" as living at 3829 Hall, in the block between Oak Lawn and Reagan streets.

[5]Bass died July 26, 2015. For accounts of his colorful life, see obituaries in *The Dallas Morning News*, July 28, 2015, and *The New York Times,* July 31, 2015.

Kay Goldman, *Dressing Modern Maternity: the Frankfurt Sisters of Dallas and the Pageboy Label* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2013. 272 pp., $39.95)



Though I have never had to face the unique challenges of shopping for maternity clothing, I have heard enough horror stories over the years to fully sympathize with my pregnant friends' plight. Even today, with all of the clothing options available, every expectant woman reaches a point where nothing fits. So, what exactly did women do when there were even fewer options for ready-made maternity wear?

Enter the Frankfurt sisters of Dallas. In Kay Goldman's *Dressing Modern Maternity: The Frankfurt Sisters of Dallas and the Page Boy Label*, readers learn a very classic story of entrepreneurs filling an important niche market. In the 1930s, Elsie Frankfurt patented a new way to make a skirt that would expand with a growing abdomen. After that initial development, three sisters built a company that designed, manufactured, and sold lines of maternity clothing. They dressed the rich and famous and provided options for working women until the early 1990s.

But this is not a straight-forward success story. After twenty years, one sister, Louise, left the business and was virtually erased from company history. A refusal to share authority or stay on top of a changing market caused many missed opportunities, ultimately leading to the sale of the company in 1993. With this sale, much of the history of the groundbreaking Page Boy brand was lost.

Kay Goldman has done an admirable job of researching and telling this complicated story, despite some key gaps in the historical record. For example, few financial records are left, so it's difficult to accurately plot the rise and fall of the company. It would have been interesting to learn more about the family dynamics, but family members were reluctant to "tell all" so Goldman and readers can only read between the lines. Goldman also does an excellent job of connecting the story of the Frankfurt sisters to larger themes of women's history and business history.

This book has many illustrations, including a large section of full color images, that help to trace the changes in fashion throughout the twentieth century. Though at times this book feels repetitive, it reveals an important and neglected aspect of twentieth-century fashion history. More importantly, Goldman also rightfully returns the Frankfurt sisters to the forefront of Dallas business history.

—Melissa Prycer
Dallas Heritage Village

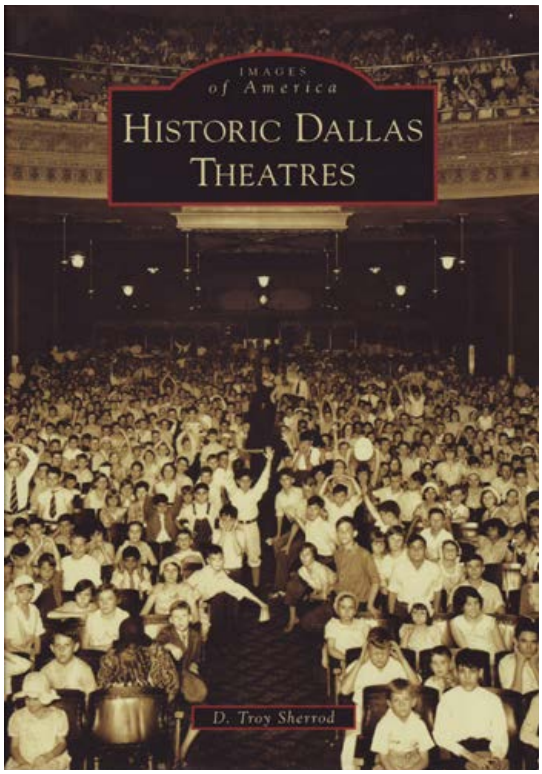
D. Troy Sherrod, *Historic Dallas Theatres* (Charleston: Arcadia, 2014, 127 pp., $21.99)

The Images of America books published by Arcadia are an accessible way for local historians to publish their work. Since authors receive little editorial help, the results can vary. Two questions to ask of such a book are: Does it provide images that are otherwise unavailable to the public? And, does the author have a passion for the subject, enough to interest even non-local readers? Both can be answered affirmatively for this book. Troy Sherrod used images from local public repositories, but we see that he has a substantial collection of his own and access to photographs from other private collections.

He clearly wants the reader to share his excitement about the romantic, exotic appeal of theaters. Whether for movies or live entertainment, people go to theaters to enter a fantasy world, and the architecture and interior decoration are free to indulge dreams. Such exuberance is evident in the Majestic Theater's design homage to both the Roman Forum and Versailles, as well the Old Mill Theater's Dutch theme, carried out on the façade in contrasting stonework. The theaters of Elm Street were once numerous enough to fill a book on their own, and Sherrod has dutifully included them all, from the singular giant arched entrance of the Washington Theater to the Palace's Wurlitzer organ, with a curving encasement so large it dwarfs the player.

The book starts with the earliest form of theater available in Dallas, a traveling circus, and continues to modern options like the Winspear Opera House. Along with the architecture, we learn about changing tastes in entertainment, including a lesson on burlesque. Touring all of Dallas, we visit both the most respectable of theaters and those patrons might have entered only with their collar turned up and hat pulled low to shade the face.

The author often includes images and explanations of what happened to the theaters after their heyday. Sherrod's photographs prove he has been documenting Dallas theaters for at least three decades. These images show us various degrees of decay or salvation, the happiest being those that have been restored for entertainment uses, like the Texas Theater in Oak Cliff. Alternative uses for historic theaters in Dallas have included a church, an artist's studio, and an auto parts shop.



As with so many books on Dallas's older architecture, this one includes far too many tales of the theaters pictured ending with demolition, often for a parking lot, or a new building that never appeared. Despite that depressing reality, Sherrod manages to leave the reader with a feeling of the magic Dallasites felt when they attended these theaters in the past, and the hope that our new theaters and the classic ones that have escaped destruction can still give us that same feeling of fantasy and escape.

—Evelyn Montgomery
Dallas Heritage Village

PHOTO CREDITS

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Bredette C. Thomas: pp. 34, 36, 37, 42

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17TH ANNUAL LEGACIES

Dallas History Conference

Breaking the Mold

Saturday, January 30, 2016
The Hall of State, Fair Park

Registration: 8:00 A.M.
Conference: 9:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

Conference Presentations

Susanne Starling
"Armed Dallas Mob Raids Corporate Headquarters: The Hedgcoxe War or the Peters Colony Rebellion"

Evelyn Montgomery,
"It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time: Planning in Dallas"

John Slate and Willis Winters
"Racial Desegregation of Dallas Parks"

J. Gordon Melton
"Swimming in Other Streams: Alternative Currents in Dallas's Religious Tradition"

Special Feature

"Conversation with a History Maker: Anita Martinez," conducted by Mercedes Olivera

Morning refreshments will be included in the registration fee of $35. Patrons ($100) will be invited to a reception with the speakers the evening of January 28. Registration forms will be mailed in December 2015. For more information, please contact Conference Coordinator Michael V. Hazel at 214-413-3665, or email: molsen@dallasheritagevillage.org.

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for Southwest Studies at SMU

*As of October 10, 2015

CONTRIBUTORS

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Steven R. Butler, a Dallas native and distant cousin of Dallas founder John Neely Bryan, earned his Ph.D. in history at the University of Texas at Arlington. He is currently an Associate Professor of History at Richland College in Dallas and Collin College in Plano. A two-time presenter at the annual Dallas History Conference, Butler has also contributed ten articles to *Legacies* since 1989, most recently "Freethinkers: Religious Nonconformity in Dallas, 1879-1904," in the fall 2012 issue.

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Stephen Fagin is Associate Curator and Oral Historian at The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. Since joining the staff in 2000, he has managed the institution's ongoing Oral History Project and contributed to collections, exhibitions, education and programming initiatives.The author of *Assassination and Commemoration* (2013) and an American History biography of Lee Harvey Oswald, Fagin holds degrees from SMU and the University of Oklahoma. He is an editorial assistant of *Legacies*.

Drew Whatley is a native of Arlington, Texas. He graduated from Austin College with a B.A. in History and a M.A. in Teaching. After working at The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, he recently moved to Orange, Texas, to work as the Educator/Assistant Site Manager for The W.H. Stark House. Since moving to Orange, he has been exploring the history of Southeast Texas and the Stark family.

Book Reviewers

Melissa Prycer is the President and Executive Director of Dallas Heritage Village. She also has interests in women's history and literary history. . . . Evelyn Montgomery is Curator of Collections at Dallas Heritage Village and Book Review Editor for *Legacies*.

Founded in London in 1865, the Salvation Army came to Dallas in the person of an Italian sea captain named Adam Janelli. After being trained in England, Janelli began holding street corner evangelical meetings at Main and Ervay Streets in 1889, in front of the downtown post office. The Salvation Army was a Christian welfare organization that focused its ministry on the poor, downtrodden, and morally "fallen." The prostitutes and drunkards who were often shunned by mainstream congregations received the Gospel and material assistance from the "soldiers" of the Salvation Army, many of whom were former drunkards and "fallen women." Janelli accepted no pay, earning a living from his advertising business while his Swiss-born wife taught French language skills to Dallas citizens. Janelli and his soldiers were often the target of verbal and physical abuse from the rougher street elements who didn't appreciate Janelli's admonitions against partaking of the "devil's brew" and committing casual theft, but Captain Janelli enjoyed a formidable patron in Police Chief James Arnold. As the organization grew, Janelli eventually assumed the post of Treasurer and held it until his death in 1925. Two years later, his beloved Salvation Army erected a fine Texas headquarters building at Ervay and Federal Streets, between the First Baptist Church and the future site of the downtown post office at Bryan and Ervay. The pretty Spanish colonial building would survive for four decades.

The former Salvation Army building site is occupied today by part of the massive First Baptist Church campus.

–Mark Rice