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THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

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“Law and Disorder” at History Conference January 28

By Dr. Mike Hazel, *Legacies* Editor

Patrons of the Seventh Annual *Legacies* Dallas History Conference will have the rare opportunity to visit the fifth floor of the old City Hall where Lee Harvey Oswald was held following the assassination of President Kennedy. This floor

sassination. Light refreshments will be served.

Patrons will be able to park in the basement-level garage of the building, at Harwood and Main streets, where Jack Ruby shot Oswald on the morning of November 24, 1963.



Lee Harvey Oswald (center in light sweater) holding a press conference after his arrest. (Courtesy: *Dallas Times Herald* Collection/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza)

has been “mothballed” for years and has seldom been open to the general public.

Conference Patrons (\$100 level) will be invited to tour the site between 6 and 7:30 p.m. on Friday, January 27, 2006 when they will have an opportunity to visit with conference speakers, including Gary Mack and Stephen Fagin of The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, both of whom will be discussing the role of the Dallas police following the as-

sassination. Light refreshments will be served. Patrons will be able to park in the basement-level garage of the building, at Harwood and Main streets, where Jack Ruby shot Oswald on the morning of November 24, 1963. The conference itself will be held between 8:45 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday, January 28, 2006, in the Jack Evans Police Headquarters on South Lamar. The theme is “Law and Disorder,” with papers on Bonnie Parker and Blanche Barrow, the daring escape of Harvey Bailey from the Dallas Criminal Courts Building, a fatal stabbing during the visit of President William Howard Taft to Dallas, and a sensational murder trial in the 1930s.



Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry (center) talking to reporters. (Courtesy: Tom Dillard Collection, *The Dallas Morning News*/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza)

For registration information, please call 214-421-5141, ext. 3801, or email the conference coordinator, Michael V. Hazel, at mvhazel@sbcglobal.net.



A crowd of reporters filled the halls of the City Jail in the days following the assassination. (Courtesy: *Dallas Times Herald* Collection/The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza)

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Five Markers Dedicated in One Day

By Charles Brown, DCHC Member

Irving dedicated what may be a record number of Texas State Historical markers for one day with five on October 29. On a bright fall morning, a bus provided by the City of Irving carried interested parties for a swing through much of southern Irving to the marker sites for the dedications.

Included in the group was project organizer City Archivist Jan Hart, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Beth Van Dyne, Dallas County Historical Commission Chairman Buddy Frazer and Charles Brown, Irving resident and grandson of Irving co-founder Otis Brown. Each of the marker sites had someone with a local connection give a brief talk.

thriving community when Irving was founded in 1903. With stores, churches, a cemetery on land donated by Sowers, a doctor, blacksmith, and post office, it was the largest community in northwest Dallas County until overtaken by Irving, which had one more advantage - a railroad. Nevertheless, it has prospered even after being annexed by Irving in 1950's. At the ceremony, Bess Ramsey described what it was like owning a store there.

D. W. Gilbert Homestead: Have you been by Plymouth Park Shopping Center? Then, you have been by the home

lin M. Gilbert, all of whom practiced medicine in Irving. At the ceremony, Dr. Clay Gilbert described life in the beautiful old home.

Kit Community: Kit was an early cross-roads community on the Birdville Trail near the confluence of the West and Elm forks of the Trinity River. With a school, stores, post office and excellent soil, it was a strong and lively place. Many of the pioneer families still have descendants in Irving. Ike Story, the postmaster, bought the first lot in the newly born Irving in 1903 and moved the Kit post office there in July 1904. The Kit Cemetery holds many pioneers of the area, including Japanese families. Louise Revier Henderson spoke fondly of growing up in Kit.

Union Bower Community: You may not have heard of it, but you have heard of the football team that plays there - the Dallas Cowboys.



Bear Creek Community:

Free blacks settled here in the 1850's, making it one of the earliest in Texas. It grew significantly after the end of the Civil War. Churches formed, stores and businesses opened, and the community flourished. Located on fertile soil, residents grew their own vegetables and livestock. Irving and Bear Creek had a close relationship which proved valuable in facilitating calm integration of schools in the 1960's. Helen Mosely and Imogene Rogers, sisters of Jackie Townsell, Irving's longest-serving City Council member, spoke at the dedication.

Sowers Community: Edmund Sowers established Sowers in 1856. It was a

site of Dr. D. W. Gilbert. A pioneer area physician, he owned much property west of Story Road, south of Airport Freeway, north of Grauwlyer, and west toward Beltline Road, on which he operated a dairy and farmed. The colonial two-story home stood until the mid-1950's, when it was demolished to build the shopping center. Gilbert was the father of Dr. Monroe Gilbert, and the grandfather of Drs. Clay W. and Frank-

The land on which Texas Stadium was built was owned by the Voirin family. That family, and several others there, had their roots in the failed La Reunion Colony a few miles southeast. The farm soil was as good as La Reunion was poor. Interestingly, it was named for a Sunday school, which evolved into Oakhaven United Methodist Church. Vivian Pierce led a big group of "Union Bower Brats" in reliving past joys of growing up there.

Grapevine Springs Park Marker Dedicated

By Lindy Thomas, DCHC Member

Natural beauty in Grapevine Springs Park and its environs would justify creation of a public pleasure resort here. More substantial reason for it is in the critical episodes in Texas history enacted here in August, 1843. These actions were directed by Sam Houston, president of the Republic of Texas. He made the grove his temporary capital for 30 days by holding it as his headquarters while he shaped national and international history.

These are the words that open a 16-page document written in 1936 by the Federal Works Progress Administration when they were considering improving the park. The project was approved, and the WPA constructed stone walls, gravel walks, stone barbecue pits, bridges, and more. The park was then closed in the 1950s and became overgrown and hidden until Dallas County reopened the park under its Park and Open Space Program.

A Texas Historical Marker was dedicated at Grapevine Springs Park in



Coppel Mayor Doug Stover (center) spoke at the event. He is shown with Coppel Historical Society President Lindy Thomas (l) and Coppel Chamber of Commerce President Beverly Widner.

dual ceremonies on October 13 and 15. The history of Sam Houston's visit to the area had been difficult to document, as it was known local legend, but difficult to prove. The Coppel Historical Society finally decided to apply for a marker to commemorate the WPA work in the park.

While researching for the application, a memoir, written by Jesse Parkinson who traveled with Houston's party, was

discovered in the Dallas Historical Society archives. It placed Houston in the area.

The official dedication ceremony was on October 13, and featured speakers Doug Stover, mayor of Coppell, and Buddy Frazer, chairman of the Dallas County Historical Commission. A community picnic and celebration took place on October 15 with keynote speaker U.S. Representative Kenny Marchant and music by the Coppel Community Chorale.



DCHC members (l to r) Clare Buie Chaney, Charles Brown, Lindy Thomas, Joyce Hicks, and Buddy Frazer attended the ceremony.

John Lane Marker Dedication

Ceremonies were held October 29 to dedicate a grave marker for John W. Lane. The event was held at the Pioneer Cemetery in downtown Dallas where Mr. Lane is buried.

Speakers at the event included cemetery historian Frances James, Dallas



DCHC Member Eric Johnson (right) represented the Historical Commission at the ceremony.

Pioneers Association President Jim Foster and DCHC member Eric Johnson. Attending the ceremony were members of the Dallas Historical Society Cemetery tour. The marker dedication was the last stop on that tour.

John Lane was a Dallas Mayor. He was born in 1835 and was trained as a printer. He came to Dallas in 1859 where he worked for the Dallas *Herald* newspaper. In 1861, he joined the Texas Calvary and served in the Civil war. Upon his return to Dallas in 1866, he was elected mayor, but only served a short time before resigning to become personal secretary to Governor James Throckmorton. He later served as a member of the state legislature where he was instrumental in getting the Texas and Pacific Railroad routed through Dallas.



Frances James, standing beside the marker, delivers remarks.

1800's Home Marked in Bosque County

By Mike Hayslip, former DCHC member

Seems like Don and Ruth Buchholz cannot avoid interrupting their travel schedule to improve various communities in which they own homes. Now they have restored and secured Registered Historic Landmark status for the Graves-Payne House, a 19th century farm home located on CR 1040 at the western edge of their ranch near Kopperl in Bosque County.

Bluebonnets and paintbrush provided natural decoration for the lunch and subsequent marker dedication held Saturday, April 23. It was a banner day in Bosque County, and the crowd swelled gradually as more than 75 people found their way to the site, which lies about 5 miles south of the Brazos River off Hwy 174.

Considered typical of the farmhouses of its day, the limestone structure measures 18 x 40 feet. With its "double-pen" floor plan, the ground level is divided into two main areas, encouraging family members to get along well together. The generous roof line and dormer windows allow for a full-length loft above. A carved limestone brick in the fireplace is marked "1876" and probably establishes the original structure's age.

Preserved behind the structure are an empty stone hen house, a working windmill, which stands atop a well, and a stone storehouse with a cistern installed on top. But a later addition of rooms on the back wall of the house has been removed in keeping with stringent Texas Historical Commission standards for

marking historic structures.

While the main house had stood for more than a century when the Buchholzes acquired the ranch in 1997, nature was slowly reclaiming it for the earth. Preservation required extensive concrete and steel reinforcements, all of which were deftly hidden by the final finished surfaces. The exterior walls were already thick enough to seat up to a 250-pounder in each window sill, and now they are a few inches thicker.

Superintending the restoration was Steve Kramer, the local contractor who had built the Buchholz'es new ranch home and also completed a major addition to the RR Ranch home of Richard and Pat Roach out of nearby Meridian. To preserve the architectural and structural integrity of the house, Mr. Kramer salvaged all the original materials possible, supplementing them as needed with recovered finds from other vintage buildings in the area. When necessary, original stones and timbers were carefully removed, marked and reinstalled in their original configurations.

Being a veteran history researcher and former member of the Dallas County Historical Commission, Ruth Buchholz traced the ownership and drafted the application necessary for securing the marker. Bosque County dates from 1854, and it eventually

became home to a preponderance of Norwegian settlers. The Buchholz Ranch itself lies across the famed Chisholm Trail, so that cattle herds probably fertilized the land on their way to low-water crossings on the Brazos.

Since completion of the house, title to that portion of the ranch had rested with almost a dozen owners, including The Aetna Life Insurance Company, which foreclosed on it in 1933. Ruth has named the house jointly after the Aaron S. Graves family, whose members built it, and the Shelton Payne family, whose 33-year occupancy was the longest to date.

The marker application required approval by the Bosque County Historical Commission, which is appointed by the Bosque County Commissioners Court, and both groups were well-represented. After a pledge of allegiance ceremony, the county judge complimented the restoration work. Sheriff's deputies cruised back and forth along the adjacent roadway raising dust clouds reminiscent of the early cattle drives.

Some 15 members of the Payne family staged a mini-family reunion in the front yard. Representing the classes of 1946-7 were George and Gladys Drum; Pete and Joann Nelson; Richard and Pat Roach; Louis and Wanda Wiggins; Byron and Nelda Zedler; Maybeth Smith and John Hall, who took pictures at the event. Drs. James and Lois Glasscock traveled from their relocated home outside Philadelphia to attend the event. Other current and former Garland residents included Janice Black, Woody and Linda Brownlee, Bob and Carolynn Canon, and Dr. Ted and Ann Carelock.

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The Dallas County Historical Commission is a county board appointed by the Dallas County Commissioners Court. The Dallas County Chronicle is a quarterly publication of the DCHC for historical groups in Dallas County and the general public. This issue was edited by Buddy Frazer and Rick Loessberg. It is published with the assistance of The Sixth Floor Museum. Articles should be sent to Buddy Frazer, via email at email@mpfservices.net, or by mail to the Dallas County Historical Commission, 411 Elm Street, 3rd Floor, Dallas, TX 75202-3301. Visit the DCHC on the web at www.dallaschc.org and the Dallas County government website at www.dallascounty.org.

Mr. Hayslip served on the DCHC from 1998 to 2005, but is still active in historical affairs in the area. He frequently writes articles for The Chronicle.