



THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

The Newsletter of the Dallas County Historical Commission

Spring 2001

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Dallas Public Library Marks 100th

The Dallas Public Library Celebrated its centennial with ceremonies April 21-22. The event was held at the J. Eric Jonsson Central Library on Young Street.



The exterior of the original Dallas Public Library circa 1901. (Photo Copyright by the Dallas Public Library and used by permission.)

The Dallas Public Library was founded in 1901 when Dallas civic leader May Dickson Exall requested and received a \$50,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie to construct the first library building. Combined with \$12,000 raised from the Dallas community, the original Carnegie building opened October 30, 1901 at the corner of Harwood and Commerce streets. That building held the books on the ground floor and an auditorium and Art Room on the top floor. The art collection later became the nucleus of what we now know

as the Dallas Museum of Art.

In 1972 the City of Dallas designated a 114,000 square foot site across from City Hall for a new library. That facility, one of the first in the country to have an on-line catalog system, opened in 1982. In 1986 it was named the J. Eric Jonsson Central Library, in honor of the former mayor.

books, magazines, videos and cassettes.

The centennial celebration featured entertainment, literary and children's activities, and a 125 thousand volume book sale. Participating in the official ceremonies were Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk, Director of Libraries Ramiro Salazar, recently retired library director Lillian Bradshaw, and Dallas City Councilmember Veletta Lill.

When the original building

opened, it contained slightly under ten thousand volumes. The library system now consists of the downtown library and 22 neighborhood branches with 2.5 million



The interior of the original library. (Photo copyright by Dallas Public Library and used by permission.)

Recent Dallas County Historical Marker Dedications:

- Shelton's Bear Creek Cemetery (Irving) (See P. 3)
- Ross Avenue Baptist Church (Dallas)
- Trees Cemetery (Dallas)
- John Shelby Wisdom "Camp Wisdom" (near Cedar Hill)

DCHC Chairman Emcee's San Jacinto Day Celebration

Dallas County Historical Commission Chairman Jeff Dunn served as master of ceremonies for the San Jacinto Day commemoration at the state park on April 21 this year. In addition to his responsibilities as DCHC chairman, Jeff Dunn is chairman of the San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board. Former Gov. George W. Bush appointed Jeff to this board in 1996. The board was established by the Legislature to advise the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department on operations and historical interpretation at San Jacinto Battleground State Park near Houston.

This year's ceremony marked the 165th anniversary of the 1836 battle that won Texas independence from Mexico. Over 2,000 spectators were in attendance at the ceremony.



This photo, taken at the San Jacinto Monument just prior to the ceremony, includes (left to right) U.S. Congressman Gene Green, State Senator Mario Gallegos, Lt. Gov. Bill Ratliff (keynote speaker), U.S. Congressman Ken Bentsen, Jeff Dunn, and Sam Houston IV, the great-grandson of General Sam Houston.

Dallas County Administration Building Celebrates 20th Anniversary

On March 27 The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza hosted a reception celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Dallas County Administration Building's dedication as a Texas Historic Landmark.

In the years since the dedication of the building it has become a valuable asset to the community – and to the world. Along with housing the Commissioner's Court and administrative offices, the building is home to The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, which chronicles President John F. Kennedy life, death and legacy and is visited by some 460,000 people annually



TSHA Seeks New Members

The Texas State Historical Association, one of the most prominent state historical organizations in the nation, is actively seeking new members.

TSHA was founded in 1897 by a distinguished group of Texans and today ranks as the oldest learned society in the state. The Association's mission is to foster the appreciation, understanding, and teaching of the rich and unique history of Texas. This is achieved through programs and activities that encourage and promote research, preservation, and publication of historical material affecting Texas.

TSHA is a private educational non-profit organization that publishes the oldest scholarly journal in Texas, the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. TSHA is also responsible for the internationally acclaimed *New Handbook of Texas* and many important reprints of rare Texana.

TSHA dues are tax deductible. For additional information and the advantages and benefits of membership, visit www.tsha.utexas.edu on the Internet.