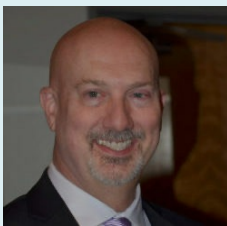




DALLAS COUNTY PIONEER ASSOCIATION

History Lives Here!
SPRING 2025

Next Meeting: Mar 22, 2025 at 10am



President's Message

Happy Spring, everyone!

The year 2025 marks the **150th anniversary** of the founding of the Dallas County Pioneer Association on July 13, 1875.

To celebrate this milestone, we're planning a special sesquicentennial event for the afternoon of Sunday, July 13,

2025—and we'd love your help! If you have experience in event planning, please reach out to me at 972-365-3779 or president@dallaspioneer.org. Our goal is to host a **memorable event** to honor and recognize our many friends and past board members while celebrating the remarkable achievements of our organization. We look forward to celebrating with you!

2025 Legacies Dallas History Conference

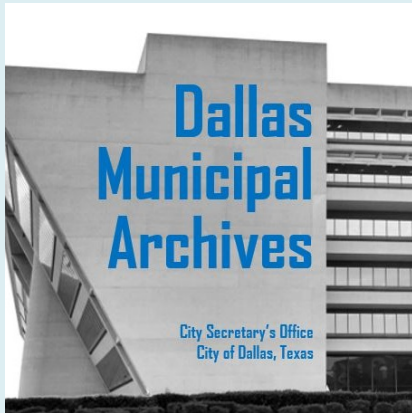
DCPA co-sponsored the 2025 Legacies Dallas History Conference on January 25th and like past years we met fellow history buffs and networked with other historical organizations. This was the 26th annual Legacies conference and was extremely well-attended. For history lovers, this is our annual Super Bowl and arguably also our most important event. Congratulations to Dr. Jann Mackey in her first year producing the conference after taking over for Dealey Campbell and Dr. Michael Hazel. DCPA's table outside the conference was next to the Dallas Genealogical Society and our **organizations have agreed to partner** on initiatives going forward - including sharing events and information in each other's newsletters.



Brian Gunn, Mike Judd, and Bill Vilbig man the DCPA table at the Legacies Conference

DCPA will also be partnering with talented historian and author Dr. Steven R. Butler in a future event involving his recent book "**Presidential Visits To Dallas**". Dr. Butler has also agreed to be our guest speaker at our September meeting where he'll also sign copies of his wonderful biography of John Neely Bryan.

AUDELIA FEST



Our friends at the [Dallas Municipal Archives](#) are planning a historical symposium on Saturday April 5th at the Dallas Public Library's Audelia Road branch from 11:00a until 2:00p. John Slate, Kristi Nedderman, and Librarian Juli Gonzalez are calling this new event "Audelia Fest" and will share information about the early history of the Lake Highlands area along with the pioneer families such as the Goforths, Bonners, McCrees, Jacksons, and Mosses who farmed the "high prairie" above the White Rock Valley. Also planned is a screening of the 2022 documentary film "Rising" which tells the story of the 1936 Hall of Negro Life at that year's Texas Centennial. We'll share more about this [on our website](#) and social media outlets soon.

NEW MEMBERS

Are you still *not* officially a member of DCPA? Please [visit our website](#) and join today. The membership application is there along with a link to submit the \$20.00 membership dues.

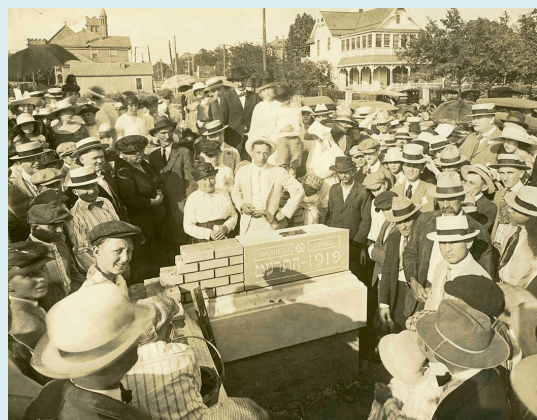
If paying by Zelle, use the email address donate@dallaspioneer.org

★ NEXT MEETING - SATURDAY, MARCH 22nd at 10am ★

Because unpredictable Spring weather has hurt our attendance at the last few March meetings, your board voted to change the March meeting from the usual Thursday night dinner meeting, to a **Saturday morning breakfast meeting instead**. Late afternoon spring thunderstorms with lightning and hail should be less likely when we meet next on Saturday March 22nd.

Our guest speaker is Beri Schwitzer, Executive Director of the Dallas Jewish Historical Society and her topic will be:

THE JEWISH HISTORY OF DALLAS



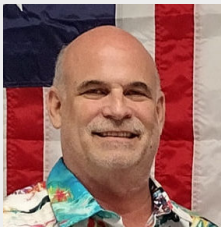
*Beri Schwitzer, Executive Director
Dallas Jewish Historical Society*

Come join us to learn how Jewish citizens contributed to the city's growth and prominence. Many of our prominent business leaders, physicians, artists, and visionaries were Jewish and their influence continues to the present day. Beri is a gifted speaker and her love of history and genealogy is evidence in her public speaking. Please [visit their website](#) to learn more about DJHS's many programs and events.

Guests are always welcome!

If you're a first-time guest or simply a new member that's never attended one of our meetings, please join us for breakfast at 9:00a prior to the 10:00a meeting. Let us know you're a **first-timer** and you'll enjoy a **complimentary meal** on us! Please make your meal reservation by clicking the red button below, or on our [website](#), or by voice mail at 972-260-9334 and mention that you're a guest. You can also email Vice President Paul Ridenour at vp@dallaspioneer.org that you're a guest.

[Make a Dinner Reservation](#)



DCPA MEMBERSHIP AT ITS FINEST

By Paul Ridenour DCPA Vice-President

At a recent DCPA meeting, member Mary Jane Wilson approached me with an interesting request. She was intrigued by a man named Lestere Miller—a **Dallas Pioneer Pilot**—and wanted to uncover more details about his history.

Specifically, she was curious to know where he was buried, where his parents were laid to rest, and where his family originated.

Of course, I was eager to help, and I figured that the unusual spelling of his first name—Lestere, with an "e"—might make my search a little easier. Diving into genealogy records on Ancestry and Find-A-Grave, I pieced together his story, and the discoveries were impressive. Lestere Miller was born in Commerce, TX, in 1892. His parents were Edgar Miller (1871 Collin Co - 1941 Dallas, TX) and Josephine "Josie" Mary Moody (1871 TN -1959



Palestine, TX). Both are buried in Irving at the Oak Grove Memorial Gardens. Lestere rose to fame in 1911 when he piloted the first recorded airplane flight in Texas, taking off from Hillsboro.

Beyond his aviation achievements, Miller was also a prolific aircraft manufacturer. Between 1911 and the outbreak of World War I, he built over 300 biplanes, thrilling daredevils across Texas. And what about that distinctive spelling of his name? Well, Miller considered 13 to be his lucky number, so he added an "e" to Lester, ensuring his full name contained

exactly 13 letters.



Lestere Miller Headstone



Lestere Miller 1911



*Paul Ridenour and Mary Jane
Wilson at the December 2024
DCPA meeting*

Mary Jane was ecstatic to learn that Miller is buried in Restland Cemetery—coincidentally, the very place she plans to be laid to rest. With a mischievous grin, she confessed the real reason behind her fascination with Lestere Miller: "He was just so good-looking!"

Now that's a membership perk—getting to dive into history, uncover hidden stories, and, occasionally, admire a handsome face from the past!

CEMETERY REPORT

by Kathy Ann Reid

☆HORTON CEMETERY☆

DCPA says, "If you visit a cemetery, please let us know the condition" and we were happy to hear recent news on Horton Cemetery from Tony Hanson, President of Dallas Genealogical Society. Tony and Victoria Clow, among others, heard about preparation for commercial development around the Horton Cemetery and are communicating with the owner's representative on how the cemetery is being protected, preserved, and respected. In 2019 as the land was being considered for development, an archaeologist and her crew were there, along with some descendants. DCPA was invited and was represented there. We were encouraged that care was being taken for the development to not encroach.

An informal writing of Horton descendant Susanna Clark is at can be [found here](#). In 2023 Susanna said of the writing, "... It's an email pulling info to help find documents. That's all! I could probably write a book on who is in that cemetery. (please note, this was in response for information from y'all!) We surely hope she will write that book! As with so many pioneer cemeteries a big question is how maintenance will be provided into the future?

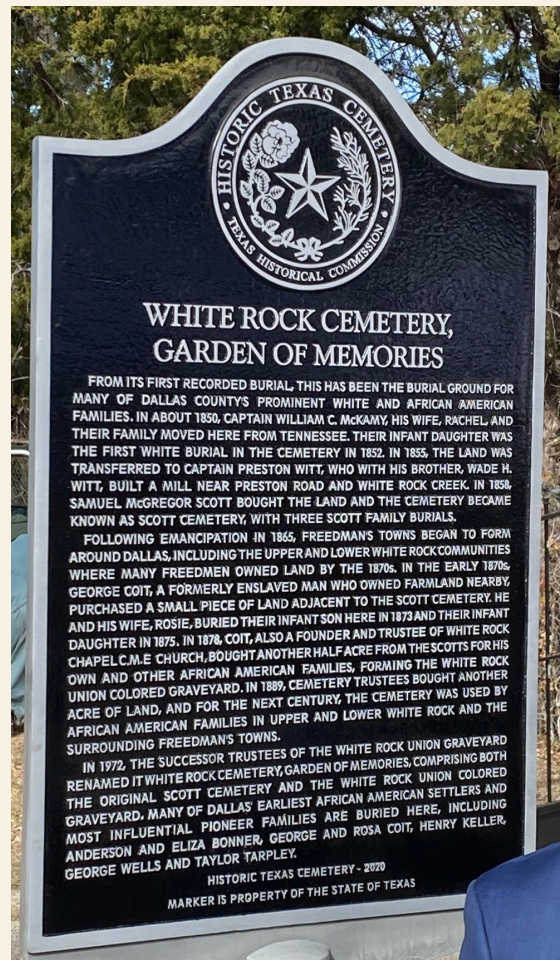
After Dustin Durrett's report of activity last year at the Garvin Cemetery, we were happy to note the responsiveness of Dr. Rhonda Dunn, Senior Planner at City of Dallas Office of Historic Preservation. Since the Garvin Cemetery has a Landmark designation, she immediately informed the developer's representative of the restrictions on areas that are Landmarked

by the city. This incident highlights the importance of that designation. In regard to the Horton Cemetery, the response of individuals and historical groups, along with the developer that had done studies in advance shows the importance of each of us in regard to the majority of the cemeteries without the benefit of a historic overlay.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE NO LONGER HIDDEN

The White Rock Cemetery Garden of Memories historical marker was officially dedicated on January 25, 2025, following a rescheduling from December. This long-awaited recognition highlights the cemetery's vital place in Dallas history.

Established over 170 years ago, the cemetery in Far North Dallas dates back to the Reconstruction era. It serves as the final resting place for formerly enslaved pioneers, farmers, and prominent Black landowners. One of Dallas County's first integrated cemeteries, it has faced numerous challenges but is now permanently recognized as a historic site. Spearheaded by White Rock Cemetery Garden of Memories, Inc., and Remembering Black Dallas, Inc.,



the effort to secure the marker was supported by the Dallas Park and Recreation Department, which provided resources for the unveiling. DCPA members Sheniqua Cummings, Kathy Ann Reid, Becky Clay, and Betsy Farris, attended the dedication. Following the unveiling, families with ancestors interred at the cemetery gathered for photographs, celebrating their deep-rooted history. Sheniqua Cummings, historical marker committee chair, expressed gratitude to those who contributed to this achievement.

The marker serves as a lasting tribute to a community's enduring legacy, ensuring its contributions to Dallas history are **never forgotten**.

At the DCPA Quarterly Meeting in December, a festive auction raised excitement, with Kathy Ann Reid winning a holiday gift basket, which she gifted to Cummings in appreciation of her dedication to preserving history. Plans for future auctions are already in motion.



★BEEMAN CEMETERY★

The Beeman Cemetery field trip included introducing our member and newly published author, Deborah Cornelius, to the area where the Beemans had settled. A serious discussion was had with Beeman descendant M C Toyer (*DCPA's Historian*) on the problem of the MANY GRAVES OUTSIDE the boundaries of the cemetery as shown on Dallas Central Appraisal District maps. We viewed two graves in the thick of mature privet that are apparently not claimed to be part of the cemetery and made plans to venture into thick woods to find other lost graves. We want to arrange another day soon to meet with Beeman descendant John Hampton who was not able to be with us.



These cemeteries need your help in order to be preserved. Please see more on our [Events page](#) at dallaspioneer.org

To view past field trips see our [Outings and Events](#) page

FUTURE EVENTS

DCPA Pioneer Picnic, Saturday, April 26, 11:00a at W W Glover Cemetery. This is a social time for DCPA and all are invited. Come talk about history and be a part of history happening!

Grave marking ceremony, Sunday, May 25, 2025, 3:00p at Merrell Cemetery,

Dallas, Texas - The ceremony for Private Eli Merrell veteran of the War of 1812. For more information, contact: DCPA VP [Paul Ridenour](#).

More opportunities to honor the pioneers who've gone before us can be found [on our website](#).

We pledge to make good use of your donations in our efforts to preserve Dallas County history! DCPA is a long-time 501(c)3 organization, EIN 75-1641669. Donations can be made on our [website](#) or through banks utilizing Zelle by simply using our email address Donate@dallaspioneer.org as the recipient.

DONATE

The Man Behind the Iconic Kiss

by *Dustin Durrett*

Glenn Edward McDuffie is best known as the sailor kissing the nurse in Times Square on Aug 14, 1945. This moment, captured by Alfred Eisenstaedt's **iconic photograph**, became a symbol of the end of World War II and was featured in Life magazine's Victory Celebrations edition. Born in 1927, McDuffie demonstrated an early determination to serve his country. In 1942, at just 15 years old, he forged his mother's signature to enlist in the U.S. Navy.



His service during World War II placed him at the heart of one of the most defining moments in American history.

Following his military service, McDuffie built a life away from the battlefield. He worked as a mail carrier and pursued his passion for baseball as a semi-professional player. In 1960, he relocated to Houston, Texas, where he remained until 2009 before **moving to the Dallas area** to be closer to his daughter.

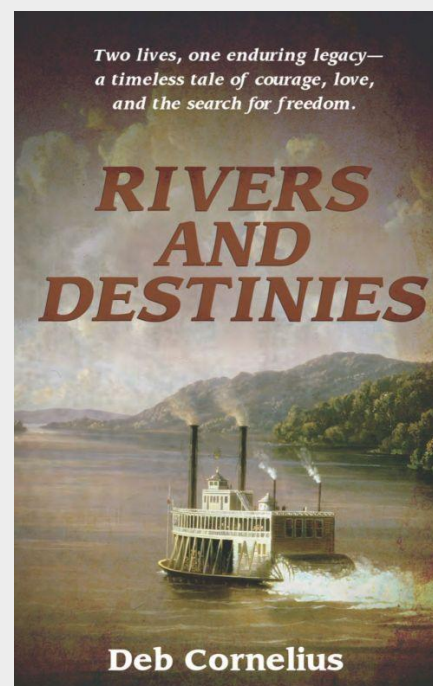
After the iconic photograph's publication with nurse Greta Zimmer Friedman, numerous men stepped forward, claiming to be the sailor in the embrace. It wasn't until 1980 that McDuffie came forward with his own claim. However, it took nearly three decades for his identity to be confirmed. In 2007, a forensic artist in Houston conducted an extensive examination of the bone structures of all 11 claimants and conclusively identified McDuffie as the man in the historic image.

Embracing his place in history, McDuffie remained active in speaking engagements and public appearances, sharing his story and experiences. His final public appearance took place on February 21, 2014. McDuffie passed away at the age of 86 following a heart attack and was laid to rest at **DFW National Cemetery**, leaving behind an enduring legacy tied to one of the most celebrated photographs of the 20th century.



PUBLICATION OF RIVERS and DESTINIES

Congratulations to DCPA member Deb Cornelius on the February 1st publication of her novel “Rivers and Destinies” in which she tells the fascinating story of pioneer settler **Captain Mabel Gilbert** who came to John Neely Bryan’s townsite in the Spring of 1842. Captain Gilbert and his family left **Bird’s Fort** (in present-day Arlington) and floated the 22 miles down the Trinity River to Dallas on a hand-made raft. Wife Charity Gilbert was the first female in the new town and the couple’s son James, the first baby born in Dallas. The Gilberts experienced many challenges but also many triumphs and Deb telling of their story is both insightful and educational. The best place to purchase this great read is on [Amazon](#) and it’s available in hardback, paperback, and also in Kindle versions!



Pioneer Pantry

This recipe is from Lilli Thompson, the grand-daughter of Hartwell B. Cox and Loutheria (Moore) Cox, Dallas Pioneers who attended the very first DCPA meeting

Pear Butter

- 6-8 Pears
- 2 Tbsp cinnamon
- 2 Tbsp Nutmeg
- 2 Tbsp Cloves
- ½ tsp Salt
- 4 Cups sugar

Cook until thick.



This recipe is from Lillei Thompson, the granddaughter of Hartwell B. Cox & Loutheria (Moore) Cox, Dallas Pioneers who attended the very 1st DCPA meeting.

2024 Society Award Recipients

Every year the Native Plant Society of Texas recognizes individuals that advance our mission. Their work was honored during the 2024 Fall Symposium in New Braunfels, TX



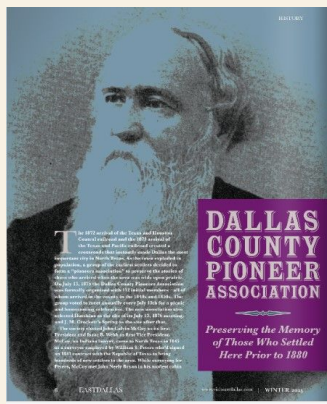
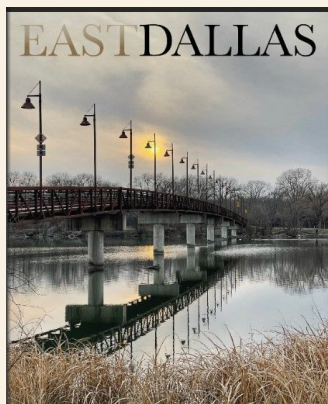
Benny Simpson Fellows Honorees

The Fellows Award is a high honor to individuals whose exceptional work enriches the Society. They are chosen from a list of members with 10 years of continuous commendable service. Congratulations DCPA Member Betsy Farris!

L-R: Betsy Farris, Cecil Carter, and Kim Conrow.
Photo by Alan Lusk

VISIT EAST DALLAS

This article has 3 photos



Our friends at [Visit East Dallas](#) featured the Dallas County Pioneer Association in the January 2025 issue of their magazine “East Dallas” and shared our mission to preserve and promote local history to their readers. If you received your copy, please look for us on pages 8 and 9. If not, the entire issue can be [viewed on their website](#). We look forward to partnering with them in the future and providing magazine content for upcoming issues!

BIRDS FORT FIELD TRIP

DCCA is planning a Saturday morning field trip to the site of Bird’s Fort (Arlington) in late April or early May. This will be followed by lunch somewhere nearby. Bird’s Fort was the fortified stockade where the area’s first permanent settlers gathered together for protection in 1841. The “fort” was abandoned the following Spring and the families gathered there (Beemans, Gilberts, Silkwoods, and others) moved elsewhere with many joining John Neely Bryan at his new townsite of Dallas. Although it’s surrounded by new housing developments, the site remains undeveloped and its location is key to understanding local history. We’ll announce a date and time soon and hope you’ll join us!



Bird's Fort Marker

W. H. GASTON, President. W. H. THOMAS, Treasurer.

THE TRINITY CEMETERY CO.

IS NOW ORGANIZED.

They have thirty acres of land about one and a half miles northeast from the courthouse, in Dallas county, well enclosed and laid out into lots, which are offered to the public. Apply to
1121ly A. W. MORTON, Superintendent.

TRINITY CEMETERY

The cemetery at this location was originally chartered in 1874 as Trinity Cemetery by William H. Gaston, W. H. Thomas and A. W. Morton. Gaston and Thomas were local banking partners and Morton was a Dallas undertaker. At the time, it was a little out of town just off the old McKinney Road. The area consisted of about thirty acres of land.

Within a year, the location numbered fourteen hundred cemetery lots, each twenty-two feet square. It was divided up by streets that were twenty-five feet wide and alleys that were six feet wide. An article in the July 3, 1875 issue of the Dallas Weekly Herald provided those details and credited city engineer Captain W. M. Johnson with having surveyed and mapped out the location. It was not without issues, however, as from time to time over the next twenty years, there were comments in area newspapers lamenting the condition of the facility, from overgrown weeds, cattle straying onto the grounds and the poor condition of a nearby pauper’s cemetery, the latter including comments about graves too shallow for proper burial and hygienic conditions.

Various solutions were proposed, including the formation of a new entity to be funded by capital contributions and annual assessments to take over management of the facility. The new company was to begin by grading and

graveling all drives and walks, repairing lots where the original owners were all deceased or absent, repairing all fencing, prohibit the use of streets for traffic and have increased security by deputizing the keeper and assistant as deputy sheriff and special police.

Finally in 1896, the current officers of the Trinity Cemetery Company, being president G. W. Swink and secretary W. L. Henry conveyed its interest to the newly formed Greenwood Cemetery Association, still in existence.

Various Dallas families have members interred here including [William H. Gaston](#), [Jacob Boll](#), [John Henry Brown](#), [William Lewis Cabell](#), [C. C. Slaughter](#), [Alexander and Sarah Horton Cockrell](#), [Benjamin Long](#), [Frank Wozencraft](#) and many others.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Frances James: [Cemeteries in Dallas: Known and Unknown](#)

Jim Wheat's [History of Dallas](#)

BOOK REVIEW:

Presidential Visits to Big D

by Steven R. Butler, Ph.D, published Dec 2023, Poor Scholar Publications, 147 pages

Born from a 2018 presentation about John F. Kennedy's visits to Dallas prior to November 22, 1963, retired Richland College history professor Steven R. Butler's latest book examines each and every time a future, present, or past American President has visited Big D and shares details about each of those Presidential visits.



Packed with photos, the JFK assassination is actually one of the less interesting presidential visits recounted in the book. Among the book's many hidden gems is the fact that Theodore Roosevelt wasn't really the first President to visit Dallas in 1905 - another one preceded him by a few months. Not all presidential visits are high profile affairs and chief executives have been popping in and out of the city regularly for the past 120 years.



Since Teddy Roosevelt's first "official" visit in 1905, every successive president has been to Dallas with George W. Bush visiting the most often and surprisingly, Lyndon B. Johnson coming here rather infrequently. Of particular interest are John F. Kennedy's two visits during the 1960 campaign where he twice visited Memorial Auditorium and gave stump speeches.

By comparison, The Beatles only appeared there once! Harry Truman visited relatives here during his childhood, made three official visits, and then a final unofficial visit in October 1961 to visit a dying Sam Rayburn at Baylor Hospital. While waiting to board a Braniff flight back to Kansas City at Love Field, a Morning News reporter asked Truman if he'd like to retract disparaging comments he'd made about Richard Nixon during the 1960 presidential campaign. Truman irritably snapped back that The Dallas Morning News "rates right behind the Chicago Tribune as the worst paper in the world"! Obviously, friction between executives and reporters isn't a recent phenomenon.

Dr. Butler makes history enjoyable as many of his former Richland College and Collin College students can attest. It's an easy and enjoyable read full of little-known anecdotes. For example, did you know that Woodrow Wilson addressed a full sanctuary at Dallas' First Baptist Church in October 1911? Or that in 1930 about 3,000 Dallasites met Calvin Coolidge's train at Union Station and rushed the platform when he stepped off the club car? Four out of five stars. Available on Amazon or directly at the [author's website](#).



With heavy hearts, the DCPA shares the passing of longtime member, **Nancy Louise Dieterich Kurrus**. A proud descendant of the Reverchon family from the historic La Réunion colony, Nancy's legacy is woven into our community's history. Her presence and dedication will be missed by all who knew her. We invite you to honor her memory by reading her [obituary here](#).

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