



NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 3, 2026 at 7pm

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### History, Not Headstones!

We really appreciate everyone attending our June meeting and enjoying Texas State Historian, Dr. **Richard B. McCaslin**. Rick's presentation on sculptor [Pompeo Coppini](#) was filmed and posted to our new [YouTube channel](#). A big thanks to board member Brian Gunn for editing and enhancing the video before posting it. Rick is located in nearby Denton and we will be partnering with him on future historical projects. A big thanks also to everyone that attended our two recent "field trips". On June 13th, twenty-five people joined us at the site of "**Birds Fort**" as DCPA Historian **M C Toyer** shared the story of the 1840-1841 expedition that established the first semi-permanent settlement in North Texas. Some of the settlers with this expedition relocated in the Spring of 1842 to John Neely Bryan's new townsite of Dallas as Bird's Fort was abandoned. The [Bird's Fort video](#) of our 2025 field trip has also been posted to our YouTube channel. Then on July 18th, we visited the "Birds Fort Trail Park" where M.C. Toyer presented "Pioneer Trails of the Three Forks" in the shade of the park's cypress trees. We've got two more historical "field trips" planned for the fall. We'll meet at Grapevine Springs in present-day Coppell to learn about Sam Houston's final 1843 attempt to meet native tribes there to sign a peace treaty, and finish our "Sam Houston Tour" at Marrowbone Springs in present-day Arlington where the 1843 treaty signing finally occurred.

*Mike Judd*

## STUDENT SUMMER ESSAY CONTEST

DCPA's inaugural summer essay contest is live, and students are invited to submit essays up through the August 31st deadline. We appreciate members and their children and grandchildren participating in this new **contest that rewards young historians** for learning Dallas history. Contest details are on our [website](#) along with the essay categories and prizes being awarded. Winners will be announced and prizes awarded at our quarterly meeting on Saturday December 5th.

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026 at 7pm

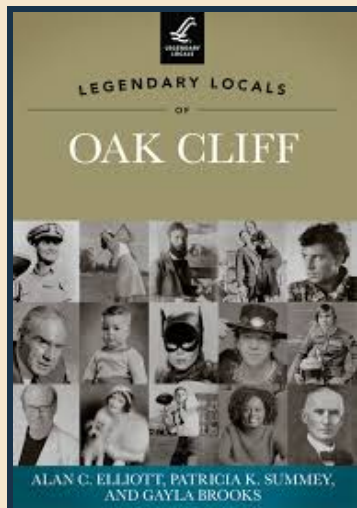
We're looking forward to seeing you at our next quarterly meeting on Thursday September 3rd. Our guest speaker is the wonderful author and local personality **Gayla Brooks**, a former KRLD radio employee who's involved in several local historical associations including DAR and DRT. Gayla serves with Heritage Oak Cliff and the Cedar Hill Museum of History and has authored two books on Oak Cliff history: "Legendary Locals of Oak Cliff" and "Images of America– Oak Cliff." She'll present from her book on native Dallasites from Oak Cliff that achieved national prominence.

Gayla is a gifted storyteller and you'll enjoy learning about the colorful characters in Oak Cliff's history. From U.S. Speaker of the House Jim Wright and legendary guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan to Hollywood actor Stephen Tobolowsky and pioneering Dallas millionaire Sarah Horton Cockrell. Each of these remarkable residents left an unforgettable mark on Dallas and their stories are every bit as fascinating as the neighborhood that shaped them.

## LEGENDARY LOCALS OF OAK CLIFF

*presented by*

**GAYLA BROOKS**



*Legendary Locals of Oak Cliff*



*Gayla Brooks*

If you're a first-time guest or simply a new member that's never attended one of our meetings, please join us for dinner at 6:00p prior to the 7:00p meeting. Let us know you're a first-timer and you'll enjoy a complimentary meal on us! Please make your dinner reservation by clicking the button below, or on our website [dallaspioneer.org](http://dallaspioneer.org), 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](mailto:vp@dallaspioneer.org) that you're a guest. The meeting will be held at our usual location: [C.C. Young - "The Point"](#) meeting room, 4849 W Lawther Dr, Dallas. ([map](#))

**Make a Meal Reservation**

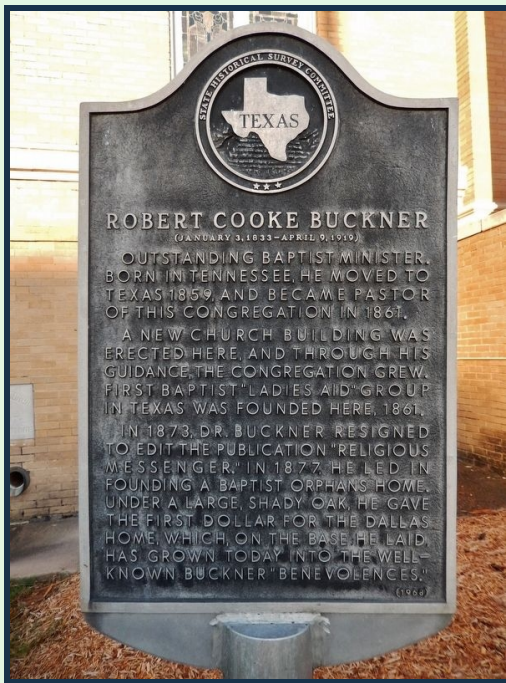
## ROBERT COOKE BUCKNER

"Father" Buckner was born January 3, 1833 in Madisonville, Tennessee to Rev. Daniel Buckner and Mary Polly Hampton Buckner, the youngest son and the fifth of six children. Oldest brother Henry Frieland Buckner (1818-1882) was also born in Tennessee and served as a career missionary to the Creek tribe in Oklahoma where he founded the Murrow Orphan's Home. Middle brother, Bennett Burrow Buckner (1826-1848), joined the Army in 1847 and died in Mexico City the following year while serving during the Mexican American War. R. C. Buckner attended seminary in Tennessee and college in Kentucky and was ordained as a Baptist minister at only 17.



Robert Cooke Buckner  
(1833 - 1919)

He pastored several Kentucky churches before marrying Vienna Phillips Long in 1854. While shepherding the First Baptist Church in Paris, Texas, Buckner founded a religious newspaper, the *Religious Messenger*, which later became the *Texas Baptist* and operated the publication until 1883.



In 1875, Buckner relocated to Dallas where his focus was establishing an orphanage under the sponsorship of Texas Baptists in 1879. This became the **Buckner Orphan's Home** six miles east of Dallas which he operated until his death in 1919.

Father Buckner was succeeded by 3 generations of his descendants and the organization is today known as Buckner International. Regarding the nickname "Father Buckner," Reverend Buckner did not recall when it began, but it happened naturally during his service at the children's home.

*Mike Judd*

We pledge to make good use of your donations in our efforts to preserve Dallas 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](mailto:Donate@dallaspioneer.org) as the recipient.

**DONATE**

## CEMETERY REPORT

During the March cleaning of McKinney Family Cemetery, **Stephanie Taylor** said that she was ready to get busy helping historical cemeteries, and after finding out there was a tree growing through the wrought iron fence at Pleasant Mound "Public" Cemetery, she informed and stormed the city through their website and telephone conversations. This cemetery is one of a few that are maintained by the city parks department. Our thanks to the City of Dallas Parks Department for the prompt tree removal and fence replacement.

Before the June field trip to **Garvin Memorial Cemetery with Dustin** again as the contact person, Stephanie sent in an application to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) for a Historical Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation. The field trip was **well attended** with Carlyn Copeland Hammons, Cemetery Preservation Program Specialist at THC, neighbors of the cemetery, and others coming out to join the group. Since this cemetery has a Landmark designation, when the Senior Planner at City of Dallas Office of Historic Preservation knows of an ownership change, she informs the owners of the restrictions on landmarked areas. The HTC designation will give another layer of protection by placing a permanent public record in the county clerk's property records. For background info, see our [Spring 2024 Newsletter](#).

**Marilyn Kosanke** went to **Old Letot Cemetery** on July 30 and reported that she did not get out of her car, but had a clear view inside the cemetery. Further, *"All the grass and weeds inside had definitely been mowed."* In a DMN article from June 23, **Robert Wilonsky** wrote *"Calletano D. Revillas.. his tombstone shrouded by the tall grass along the chain link."* That grass has been cut and the Revillas tombstone can now be clearly seen. There are many trees. None appeared fallen or broken or in distress. Despite the heat, the leaves on the trees were dark green. As shown in Mr. Wilonsky's photograph, the trees are not obstructing the large sign over the gate.



There is a chain and a padlock on the gate. Someone has written 10740 in white paint on the brick pavement in front of the gate. There was no signage

indicating the cemetery is owned by the City of Dallas or contact information.”

We sent a letter to the owner of the land around the Bailey-Cumby-Webster Family Cemetery, Dallas, Texas, requesting access. Receiving no response, we will file a Notice of Existence of a Cemetery in the county clerk's property records with an accompanying notice by U.S. mail going to the owner. The location is in a wooded area south of the intersection of Belt Line Rd. and Fish Rd., on the west side of Belt Line. At some time in history an unidentified man hopped the fence to locate the tombstones that were inside a chain link fence and marked a map with the location. Fortunately we now have the map.

A fraction of recent news on the Constellation of Living Memorials (CLM) is that it was selected as a 2026 Conservation Wrangler through Texan by Nature (a statewide program founded in 2011 by Laura Bush). Their team filmed a documentary at Albert Carver Cemetery. CLM was featured in D Magazine (Friday, August 14, 2026), and a journalist for Texas Parks & Wildlife met several cemetery caretakers and lead volunteers for an article planned to be in the January – February 2027 issue.

Please let us know which Dallas County cemeteries interest you and if you visit a pioneer cemetery, please let us know the condition by emailing [cemetery@dallaspioneer.org](mailto:cemetery@dallaspioneer.org).

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## UPCOMING SATURDAY EVENTS

**SEPTEMBER 19 Driving Tour:** Meet at 10:00 at W. W. Glover Cemetery, 6650 Military Parkway, Dallas. We'll hand out a printed itinerary with information on each cemetery. We'll be driving our own cars to Lagow Cemetery, then to Confederate Cemetery, Oakland Cemetery, Butler Nelson Cemetery, Woodland Cemetery, and we'll finish up at Glen Oak Cemetery.

**Contact:** Dustin Durrett (214) 854-6942 *(text only please)*

**OCTOBER 24 Cleanup:** Meet at 10:00 at Wesley Cockrell Cemetery, 800 S. Dwight Ave, Dallas *(south of Jefferson Blvd. at the end of S. Dwight Ave.)* We'll remove vegetation from around tombstones and then drive to a location near Horton Cemetery/Crestview Cemetery. Walking on rough terrain will be required to this cemetery that is in a wooded area and the best entry point is yet to be determined. A letter will be sent to the property owner of surrounding land to request their preferred entry point.

**Contact: to be announced.**

**DECEMBER 19 Christmas Cleaning:** - Meet at 10:00 at McAdams Cemetery for a Christmas cleaning. Bring your gloves, favorite hand tool, or lawn mower. Afterward we can check out the near-by Church's Chicken for a possible lunch together.

**Contact: to be announced.**

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

And for updates, see [Upcoming Events](#).

For cemetery locations, please see our [Cemetery Page](#).

## John H. Cochran, Jr. (1878-1949)

A wonderful photo of John H. Cochran, Jr. was recently shared online after being discovered in an antique store by historian Shelley Cardiel.



Although less well known than his pioneer settler parents John Sr. and Martha Jane Johnson Cochran, John Jr. was born in Dallas and was the only one of the seven Cochran children to relocate to the family's ranch outside Sweetwater in 1894 as his parents' health began to fail.

At the time of this 1890 photo, John Jr. was serving as a page in the Texas Senate where his father was a legislator from Dallas County. He eventually became the Nolan County District Attorney and later an elected county judge there. Cardiel would like to return the photo to Cochran descendants that are living

in either the Dallas or Sweetwater areas. Please contact us at [info@dallaspioneer.org](mailto:info@dallaspioneer.org) if you're a Cochran or a member of Cochran Chapel UMC in Dallas.

*Mike Judd*

## TEXAS' FIRST BLACK ARCHITECT

William Sidney Pittman (1875–1958) was Texas' first Black architect and one of the first Black architects to gain national recognition. During his career, he designed more than 50 buildings and helped shape Black communities across Texas.

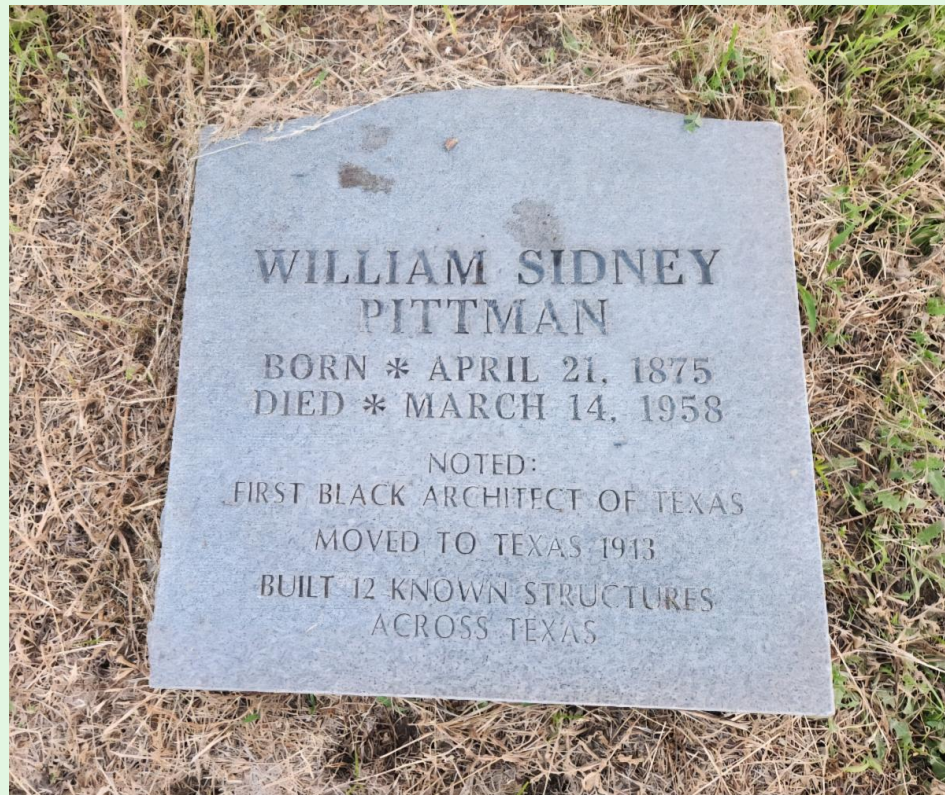
Born in Montgomery, Alabama, Pittman studied at Tuskegee Institute before earning a scholarship to study architecture at Drexel Institute in Philadelphia. After teaching at Tuskegee for several years, he moved to Texas in 1913 to continue his career.



*William Sidney Pittman*

Pittman designed churches, schools, libraries, meeting halls, and other important buildings. Some of his best-known work includes the Knights of Pythias Temple in Dallas, Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church in Fort Worth, Joshua Chapel A.M.E. Church in Waxahachie, Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church in Houston, and Houston's Colored Carnegie Library.

His most famous building is the Knights of Pythias Temple in Deep Ellum. During segregation, it was a busy place where people could shop, visit doctors and dentists, attend meetings, and gather for community events. The building was later restored and reopened in 2020 as The Pittman Hotel.



Later in life, Pittman stopped practicing architecture, worked as a carpenter, and published a local newspaper. He died in Dallas in 1958 and is buried in Glen Oaks Cemetery.

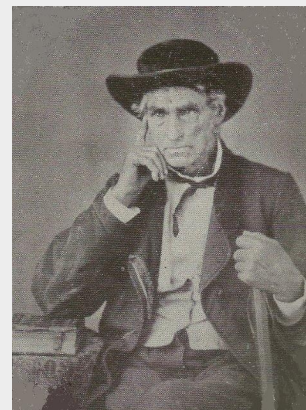
*Dustin Durrett*

### **Thomas McKee Ellis (1799-1890)** **Mary “Polly” Witt Ellis (1803-1889)**

Thomas Ellis was born in Abbeville County, South Carolina and descended from Scots-Irish settlers who fought in the Revolutionary War. Around 1819, Thomas relocated to the Illinois frontier where he met and married Polly Witt in 1820.

After years of hardscrabble life on the frozen prairie, the couple and eight of their eleven children re-settled in early 1846 to acreage just outside the southern Dallas County town of Lancaster joining two adult married children who'd came to Texas the year before. Descendants of the large Ellis clan remain in and around southern Dallas County and seven of the Ellis children are shown in this group photo.

Thomas McKee was blind the last ten years of his life and relied on Polly who preceded him in



*Thomas McKee Ellis*

death by about a year. The dilapidated Ellis farmhouse was a common site along Belt Line Road until its eventual collapse around 2005. Thomas and Polly McKee are both interred at the Edgewood Cemetery in Lancaster.



Mary "Polly" Witt Ellis



Mike Judd

## Five Texas Centennial Markers in Dallas

The Texas Legislature created the Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations in 1935 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Texas' independence from Mexico. Around \$3,000,000 was allocated for *"the placing of suitable markers, memorials or buildings at places where historic events occurred...the placing of monuments to early patriots of Texas...the purchasing of suitable tracts of land where necessary for an approved celebration; and the staging of pageants at appropriate places; and an exposition in the recognition of the basic industries and their historical significance in the progress and growth of Texas."* A total of 1,100 such items were placed around the state. Five markers were installed in Dallas County. The first four were erected by the State of Texas and the last by the Texas Highway Department.

**Cedar Springs** - This gray granite marker commemorates the exploration of the area by Col. William Cooke and the establishment of the Cedar Springs community. It's considered to be the oldest historical marker in Dallas.

*"Earliest known historic site in Dallas County. Visited in 1840 by Colonel Wm. G. Cooke's preliminary exploration for a route between Austin and Red River. A community also called Cedar Springs, established in this vicinity in 1843 by Dr. John Cole, rivalled Dallas in an election in 1848 for county seat. In 1929, the land was annexed to Dallas."*



Cedar Springs, Marker #6647,  
4600 Lemmon Avenue

### Confederate Arms Factory

This marker was created in gray granite and commemorates a factory established in 1862 to manufacture pistols during the Civil War. It reads:

*"Established by Joseph H. Sherrard, William L. Killem, Pleasant Taylor and John M. Crockett in 1862 to manufacture pistols for the State of Texas."*

Marker #6655 is located at 220 W. Main St, Lancaster, Texas in front of the Veterans Memorial Library.



Confederate Arms Factory

### Col. William G. Cooke

This marker is a memorial to William Gordon Cooke and his leadership of roughly forty soldiers of the Republic of Texas who camped in the area while tasked with mapping out a Central National Highway.

Cooke had a very interesting and colorful career including being involved in the Santa Fe Expedition and many other events. He reportedly died of tuberculosis in 1847 at the age of 44.

The text reads:

*"To the memory of Colonel William G. Cooke and the forty other members of the Regular Army Republic of Texas who*



Col. William G. Cooke  
Marker #6657  
Ewing Avenue & Clarendon  
Drive, near the Dallas Zoo.

camped in this vicinity in October, 1840 while locating the Central National Highway. The importance of this military road in the history of Dallas will not be forgotten."



*Texas Land & Emigration Co.  
Marker #6898*

*Located in center median  
13017 William Dodson Pkwy,*

### **Texian Land & Emigration Company**

Like the others above, this marker is also in gray granite. It is to note the first agency of the organization, now generally referred to as Peters' Colony. All of Dallas County and several other counties in full or in part, were part of its boundaries. This is the text on the marker:

*"Site of the First Agency, January, 1845, of the Texian Land and Emigration Company. Generally known as "Peters' Colony" in honor of William S. Peters who, under a colonization contract secured in 1841 from the Republic of Texas, introduced more than ten thousand settlers to 17 counties of North Texas."*

### **Dallas County**

This marker is to commemorate the founding of Dallas County. It is unlike the others markers because it is constructed of pink granite. In addition, it was erected by the Texas Highway department rather than the State of Texas like the others.

*"The unincorporated town of Dallas was designated as a postoffice by the Republic of Texas in 1843. The County of Dallas was created by the first Legislature of Texas on March 30, 1846 from portions of Robertson and Nacogdoches counties. Both city and county were named in honor of George Mifflin Dallas (1792 - 1864) Pennsylvania Democratic statesman who was elected the eleventh vice-president of the United States on a platform favoring Texas annexation."*



*Dallas County, Marker #6666,  
Downtown near JNB Cabin*

*Mike Magers*

**Samuel McGregor Scott (1798-1878)**  
**Camilla West Payne Scott (1803-1883)**

The youngest son of a Revolutionary War hero from Lynchburg, VA, Samuel McGregor Scott married Camilla West Payne in 1819 and a Lynchburg artist painted the newlyweds' portraits. The couple later inherited the 1786 Scott family home "Locust Thicket" where they raised their 11 children until selling it in 1858 and relocating to the frontier village of Dallas, Texas.



*Samuel McGregor Scott*



Camilla West Payne Scott

Once here, the Scotts eventually acquired farmland near Trinity Mills twelve miles north of the city. Their oldest son Roy became a physician and served the rural Trinity Mills community. His two sons became prominent Highland Park realtors. Samuel and Camilla are buried in downtown's Masonic Cemetery on Young Street near Roy and his Missouri-born wife Jennie Catherine. These lovely portraits in oil are now 207 years old and remain on display in a local history museum in Lynchburg, VA.

*Mike Judd*

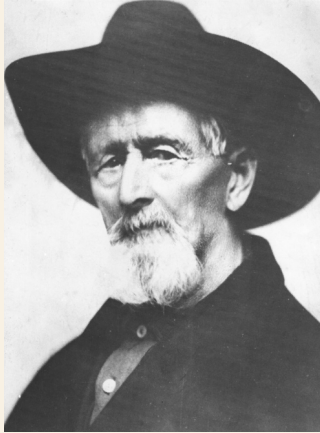
## TEXAS TOWNS IN A FAMILY TREE

I am a 6th generation Texan. My 3rd great grandfather was Isaac Hurst. He came to Texas from Virginia in 1843 and registered his marriage in Ellis County. He received 640 acres under Peters Colony Second Contract. His land was at Westmoreland Rd and Red Oak Creek Rd, closer to Ovilla than to Red Oak, TX.

My maternal grandmother was Alice Lorraine (Hurst) Joines. My 3rd cousin 2x removed was **William Letchworth Hurst**. In the late 1890s, Hurst moved his family into a house approximately one mile north of the present Highway 10, and he found success trading and speculating in land and horses. Uncle Billy was most known as the area's most popular fiddle player, but it was his land deal in 1903 with the **Rock Island Railroad** that eventually led the community to take his name. He agreed to let the railroad lay track connecting Fort Worth and Dallas on his land with the condition that a stop be established there, and a depot built and given his name. The town **officially became Hurst, TX**, in 1909. Hurst's fiddle is on display at the Hurst Public Library.

Alice Hurst's mother was Lucy Ann McClellan. My 2nd great grandmother was Susan Alice (Denton) McClellan. John and Lonus Denton were part of the band of Denton brothers who went to Texas to found Denton, TX. John

and Lonus came back to Alabama after a year as they found the land too windy and flat. While Denton County itself was established in 1846, the city was officially laid out and founded in 1857 before being formally incorporated in 1866.



*William Letchworth Hurst*



*Vernon D. Singleton*



*Tillman Kimsey Seago*

My paternal grandmother was Laura Bell (Singleton) Ridenour Burnett. My 1st cousin 2x removed was **Vernon D. Singleton**. Vernon was a **Dallas County Commissioner** in 1932 and served District 4 for nine years. In 1941, Eagle Ford Rd was renamed to Singleton Blvd. Vernon graduated Oak Cliff High School, attended two years at UT Austin, and after completing a night school law course, was admitted to the Texas Bar Association and the American Bar Association. He was past president of the Oak Cliff Lions Club, former director of the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce, and a director with the Oak Cliff Bank & Trust Company. Vernon was credited with suggesting Dallas County's use of the voting machines. In 1947, he was named to the Board of Education by Gov. Coke Stevenson. Before being elected as a commissioner, he worked at a dry cleaning and dyeing firm owned by his parents. When Vernon passed away, the city of Dallas closed half a day for his funeral. Following Laura Bell Singleton back three more generations, my 3rd great grandmother was Caroline Ellen Wesley (Seago) Glausier. I am related to **Tillman Kimsey Seago**, who was the **founder of Seagoville, TX**, as there was already a town named Sego. Known to his friends as "Uncle Kimsey," he was a state legislator, farmer, merchant, and Seagoville's first postmaster in 1881. He was born on July 29, 1836, in Cherokee County, Georgia. He was the eldest son of Lucinda (Garrett) Seago and Isaac L. Seago. His father served in the Mexican War and died of the measles in Mexico when Tillman was ten years old. Seago and his wife had several generations of slaveowners in their families, but they did not own any slaves themselves. Seago enlisted as a Private, Company I, Third Texas Cavalry, with the Confederate Army in 1861. He later served under the command of Brigadier General Benjamin McCulloch, a former Republic of Texas congressman who was killed at the Battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas.

*Paul Ridenour*

## IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to note the recent passing of two of our lifetime members.

## JIM FOSTER (1943 - 2026)

Past DCPA President Jim Foster, whose leadership and commitment helped DCPA grow and flourish, passed away on August 14 after a brief stay in the hospital. He was 82.

Foster served two terms as DCPA president from 2004 to 2008. One of the highlights of his tenure was **"La Reunion's 150th Anniversary"** weekend back in 2005. This watershed milestone drew a strong turnout and shifted public perception of La Réunion from a "failed experiment" to a foundational success story.



*Jim Foster*

Foster's dedication to Dallas history also extended to his public service. As a county judge from 2007 to 2010, Judge Foster helped DCPA sponsor several local historical markers. Among them is the [marker](#) at 2301 Pacific Avenue, commemorating the arrival and crossing of the first two railroads in Dallas.

Even after his years as president and county judge, Foster remained an active member of DCPA. In fact, he was present at our most recent meeting, a fitting reminder of his enduring commitment to the organization and its mission.

DCPA remembers Jim Foster with gratitude for his years of leadership, public service, and dedication to preserving the history of Dallas.



*Michael Hayslip*

## MICHAEL HAYSLIP (1943 - 2026)

Michael Ray Hayslip of Garland passed away on June 19th at the age of 82.

A 1962 honor graduate of Garland High School, where he served as student council president, Mike also held two chemical coating patents.

Mike was a **founding member** of the [Garland Landmark Society](#), where he has served in official capacities for more than 50 years. He was also a **life member** of DCPA and served several terms on the Dallas County Historical Commission.

Prioritizing action over talk and performance over popularity, he believed his own good fortune obligated him to contribute at least as much as he had received and we thank him for ALL his contributions.

## YOUTUBE CHANNEL

We may be a little late to the YouTube party, but as they say, better late than never! Our first three videos are listed below, with more content on the way. Please consider subscribing to our channel, and send your suggestions for future videos to [media@dallaspioneer.org](mailto:media@dallaspioneer.org).



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