



# DALLAS COUNTY PIONEER ASSOCIATION

History Lives Here!

SPRING 2026

Next Meeting: 03/21/26 at 10am



## WELCOME TO OUR 151st YEAR!

Seems like only yesterday we celebrated Dallas County Pioneer Association's Sesquicentennial at our gala event last September at El Fenix.

As we start our 151st year we've got a lot of things planned and we appreciate your membership and partnership going forward! And as announced at our December meeting, we're searching for a new Secretary and a new Treasurer to serve on our board of directors for 2026-2027. Membership will elect these officers at our upcoming March meeting. Because there are two board openings, we'll accept nominations from the floor before appointing interim officers if necessary.

<b>President:</b>	Mike Judd (2nd term)
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Paul Ridenour (2nd term)
<b>Secretary:</b>	Open Position
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Open Position
<b>Historian:</b>	MC Toyer

Other positions are appointed by the Board rather than elected by the membership. These positions include Membership Coordinator, Cemetery Committee Chair, Webmaster, Social Media, and others as needed.

## RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS



DCPA was proud to co-sponsor the 27th annual **Legacies Dallas History Conference** which was held at the Dallas County Commissioner's Court facility on January 31st. It was great seeing old friends and also meeting new ones at the sold out conference. Next year's conference theme will be "[Dallas Underground](#)" so start planning now to attend. Or even better yet, submit a topic idea and offer to be a guest

speaker!

## AudeliaFest

Our friends at the **Dallas Municipal Archives** are hosting the second annual Audelia Fest on March 28th from 10:00am to 2:00pm at the [Dallas Public Library's Audelia Road Branch](#). This historical event teaches the history of today's Lake Highlands area starting with the earliest pioneers who settled in the upper White Rock Creek valley. The settlers of the "high prairie" included those in the small "Ardelia" community centered around today's Forest Lane and Audelia Road. A store and post office named Ardedia serving the rural community was named for Ardedia Ellen Jackson West and the road to the community became known as the Ardedia Road. The road's spelling somehow changed to Audelia over time but the spirit of the community remains. DCPA and nine other historical organizations will have tables and booths at this event and hope to see you there!

## Oak Cliff [Earth Day](#)

April 19th will be DCPA's fifth straight year to set up a booth at Lake Cliff Park and share Dallas history with lots of new people. The event is free and open to the public from 1:00pm to 5:00pm and this year all the historical and neighborhood groups will be located together instead of spread out all over. There are food trucks, live music, and thousands of visitors enjoying a beautiful afternoon next to Lake Cliff. If you're afraid that Earth Day might just be a bunch of smelly old hippies hanging out, trust us when we say that Earth Day is a family event enjoyed by everyone! We hope to see you there!

## Old City Park Volunteers Needed

Our friends at Old City Park had a successful volunteer training event back in January and signed up a large number of new people interested in keeping the park active as a historical destination. They need more volunteers and would love to hear from you. Despite the naysayers out there, people still love and care about the city's first public park and are fighting for its survival and continued existence. The return of the annual "Candlelight" festival in December was well-attended and DCPA members helped as volunteers. Please call (972) 482-3055 to [get involved](#) or email [citypark@dallas.gov](mailto:citypark@dallas.gov). Regarding OCP, the glass is definitely half-full, not half-empty!



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## NEXT MEETING - SAT, MAR 21 at 10am

We're looking forward to seeing you at our next quarterly meeting on Saturday March 21st at [CC Young](#) in Dallas. Our guest speaker is local Historian **Ron Finch**, who married into Dallas' pioneer **Bennett Family** and became fascinated with their many accomplishments and dived deeply into their history. After many years in Oak Cliff, Ron is now a Waxahachie resident and active in Ellis County historical groups. It will be great to have him with us on the 21st. He'll be presenting on the historic Bennett Family and their arrival to Dallas County in the 1800's

## Ron Finch



*William & Sydney Bennett*



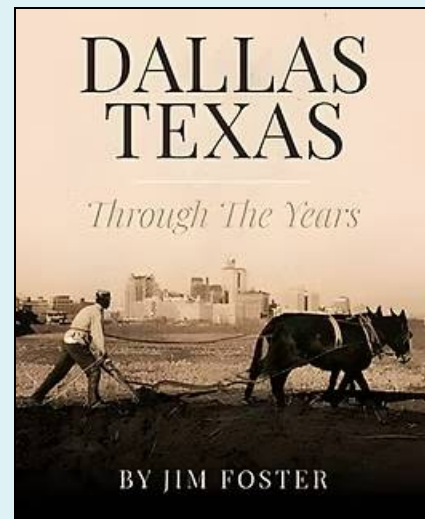
*Ron Finch*

If you're a first-time guest or simply a new member that's never attended one of our meetings before, please join us for breakfast at 9:00a prior to the 10:00a meeting. Meal reservations *are* required for anyone wishing to dine, however first-time guests enjoy breakfast on us; all others may reserve a meal by clicking the red button below, visiting [dallaspioneer.org](http://dallaspioneer.org), or leaving a voicemail at 972-260-9334.

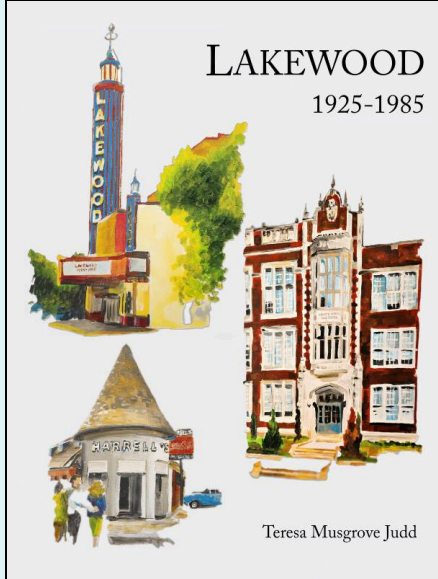
[Make a Meal Reservation](#)

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Past DCPA president **Jim Foster's** latest history book, "Dallas, Texas, Through The Years" has received widespread praise for its expansive and colorful take on our city's history. The book highlights how Dallas has always been an important crossroads starting at the bluff overlooking the Trinity River where two Indian footpaths met at the shallowest river crossing for 100 miles in either direction. It's a fascinating book full of photos that needs to be in everyone's collection.



DCPA member **Teresa Musgrove Judd** has also published a book on the history of Dallas' Lakewood neighborhood. A ten-year research effort, "**Lakewood 1925-1985**" is a colorful 480-page encyclopedia of every store, church, restaurant, school, and significant structure in the neighborhood. Starting with the 1925 creation of the Lakewood Shopping Center that was built on excess land sold by the Lakewood Country Club, the book is full of photos and first-hand stories told by Lakewood's residents. Don't remember when El Chico opened their location on Abrams Road? It's in the book. Forgotten the name of the upscale supper club that preceded the Dixie House



at 6400 Gaston Avenue? It's also in the book! And *lots* of historic previously unpublished photos!

Although both books can be purchased directly from their respective authors, DCPA will be scheduling a book signing event for both in the very near future. More details coming!

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](mailto:Donate@dallaspioneer.org) as the recipient.

**DONATE**

## CEMETERY REPORT

*by Kathy Ann Reid*

### ANNUAL PIONEER PICNIC

Our Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 11:00am at the Glover Cemetery at 6650 Military Parkway in Dallas. This is a social time for DCPA. All are invited to the cemetery where parking is abundant and a restroom is available in the building next



door. Descendants of Samuel A. Haught II and Millie Carrie Hunnicutt are arriving days before the picnic to visit places where their ancestors lived in Dallas & Mesquite. Last year descendants of W. C. Hunnicutt and Nancy Beeman who converged from three states and El Paso were here several days to do the same and are planning to join us again this year. For these Haughts and Hunnicutts to meet will be extra special since their ancestors had many connections back in the 1800s. Come talk about history and be a part of history happening! Directions on our [Events Page](#)



### McADAMS CEMETERY

The Dallas County Pioneer Association advises *"If you visit a cemetery in Dallas County, please let us know the condition"* and we're concerned about recent news on the McAdams Cemetery. Dustin Durrett, our faithful cemetery watcher, and his family wanted to visit this cemetery but were deterred when they saw many occupied

campsites crowded around the cemetery. The perimeter fencing around the cemetery is very fragile and is down in some areas. Some of the tree trunks have enmeshed into it. One concern is that the residents of these campsites might damage the fencing and maybe even the fragile tombstones. On the 3rd report filed through the city website, a note of "Violation" was made, but we still don't know if the problem has been resolved.

## **FREEDMAN'S CEMETERY**

The Freedman's Facebook page reported that in honor of Black History Month there was a bus tour that started at Freeman's Cemetery and concluded at the downtown Dallas library where there is an exhibit detailing many events and tours of Remembering Black Dallas that they employ to "keep history alive, so hopefully we can learn from the past and not bury it."

## **CONSTELLATION OF LIVING MEMORIALS**

Kim Cole (descendant of Albert Carver) is once again hosting 4-H classes for children ages 8 – 18 years at the Inspired Vision Compassion Center with the outdoor-nature portion being held across the street on the grounds of the Albert Carver Cemetery. The March - May term is from 4:00-6:00 PM on Tuesdays, and the focus is "How to Build a Rain Garden in a Historical Cemetery."

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The owners of the land of the **Horton Cemetery** and Crestview Cemetery very responsibly filed a Notice of Existence of a Cemetery in the county's official public records and we owe them thanks for that. Now we are waiting for them to tell us the point on a drivable roadway from which they would prefer the public to access the cemeteries. We would appreciate a nice gated fence.

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The **Texas Historical Commission** was thrilled to announce that 51 Texas cemeteries have been put on the HTC Honor Roll and will receive the Historic Texas Cemetery designation! We have two of those cemeteries in Dallas County: Tarver Cemetery at Five Mile Community and Haught Store Cemetery in Mesquite. Congratulations!

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A **recent change in state law** encourages the government's representatives to check with historical organizations before taxing cemetery land, and the Cemetery Watchers of DCPA announced to the Dallas Central Appraisal District our desire to help in that manner. We pointed out several cemeteries that were not shown as tax exempt on their website, and that has been corrected. We requested changes in their depictions of boundaries on **Haught Store Cemetery** and **Beeman Memorial Cemetery** and both of those, to date, have not been changed.

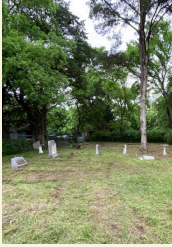
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There is a small **volunteer opportunity** concerning Pleasant Mound "Public" Cemetery that can be done from home. If interested please email [cemetery@dallaspioneer.org](mailto:cemetery@dallaspioneer.org).

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See our [Cemetery Page](#) for more info and locations of the cemeteries mentioned here.

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



## McKINNEY FAMILY CEMETERY CLEANUP

We would love to see you at the McKinney Family Cemetery cleaning day on Saturday, March 14, with Dustin Durrett as our contact person.

See our [Events page](#) for more info.

## POLIO PAUL

*By Dustin Durrett*

Paul Richard Alexander, known worldwide as “Polio Paul,” was a man whose life embodied resilience, intellect, and determination. Born in Dallas, Texas, in 1946, Alexander contracted polio at just six years old during a devastating outbreak that affected thousands of children across the United States.

The disease left him paralyzed from the neck down and unable to breathe independently, requiring him to live inside an iron lung for most of his life. Doctors initially believed Paul would not survive, and if he did, they expected his life to be severely limited.



Paul proved them wrong. Through determination and adaptive technology, he completed his education, becoming one of the first homeschooled students in Dallas. He later attended the University of Texas at Austin, earning both a bachelor's degree & a law degree, and went on to practice law for many years.

In addition to his legal career, Paul became an author & advocate. He wrote: "Three Minutes for a Dog: My Life in an Iron Lung", typing with a stick held in his mouth. In later years, he gained widespread recognition on social media, where millions were inspired by his humor, honesty, and perspective on life with disability.

## PICTURE THIS

by Brian Gunn

Commerce Street Pedestrian Bridge 1934.



Commerce Street with the view of an early pedestrian bridge that ran between the Adolphus Hotel and the Baker Hotel.

*Photo from Dallas Public Library Archives.*

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## LANG & WITCHELL ARCHITECTS

by Mike Magers

This architectural firm was founded by Otto Lang and Frank Witchell. Otto Lang was born in Germany in 1864. He came to the United States in 1888 on a wedding trip and decided to stay in Dallas. For a couple of years, he worked for local architects who did work for Texas and Pacific Railway. One of the buildings he designed there was the Texas and Pacific depot in Fort Worth followed by the depots in Wichita Falls, Amarillo, Paris and Weatherford. Lang formed his partnership with Frank Witchell in 1905.

Frank Witchell was born in the south of Wales in England in 1879. He came to the United States with his parents when he was 2 years old and lived in San Antonio where he attended public schools. He had no formal educational training in architecture, but apprenticed in the profession when he was 14 years old. In 1898, he began working with the Dallas firm of Sanguinet and Staats as a designer and draftsman until he joined the newly created partnership with Otto Lang in 1905.

Their partnership was in existence for about 37 years before dissolving upon Lang's retirement. They designed numerous commercial and residential buildings in Dallas and other towns, including 7 courthouses in Texas. Some of their commercial structures in Dallas are listed below:



## **SANGER BROTHERS**

Sanger Brothers Building (now El Centro College) – A Chicago School/Sullivan-esque commercial building in the West End, originally a flagship department store for the Sanger Brothers mercantile business. The structure was completed in 1910.

## **CHEVROLET MOTOR COMPANY**

Chevrolet Motor Company Building – A 1923 industrial/commercial structure in Deep Ellum, noted for its concrete-and-brick design.



## **HIGGINBOTHAM-BAILEY**

Higginbotham-Bailey Building – A Renaissance Revival/Chicago school warehouse/office building in downtown Dallas in what was then known as the garment district. The western section of the building was completed in 1914 and additions were added in 1917 and 1923.

## **LONE STAR GAS COMPANY**

Lone Star Gas Company / Dallas Gas Company Buildings (part of LSG Lofts) – Early Art Deco industrial and office buildings in downtown Dallas that have since been adapted (Lone Star Gas is a 13-story landmark structure).

Construction dates began in 1924 and 1931 with major renovations and additions decades later.



## **WESTERN UNION**

Western Union Telegraph Company Building (originally the Masonic Blue Lodge Temple) – Completed in 1913, it later housed Western Union. The first and second stories were for business purposes and the remainder was for Masonic lodge activities.



## **SEARS BUILDING**

The Sears building on Lamar Street in Dallas — originally the Sears Roebuck & Co. Catalogue Merchandise Center (now known as Southside on Lamar) was completed in 1913 with full occupancy being available in 1914. It was unique in many ways, including having a railway siding that ran through the building. It was a reinforced concrete building believed to be clad in local sourced brick. Architectural details include references to a blending of Prairie Style and Sullivanesque features.



## **DALLAS H.S./CROZIER TECH**

Dallas High School (also known as Central High / Crozier Tech) – A Classical Revival school building completed around 1907.



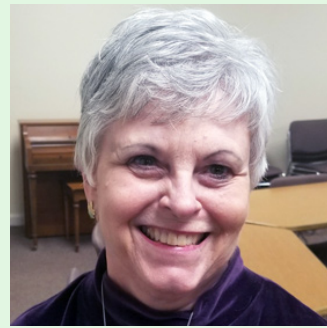
## **RECORDS BUILDING**

Dallas County Records Building (originally known as the Hall of Records) was completed in 1927 and 1928 to house county records, offices and courtrooms. Its architectural style is said to be Gothic Revival.



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR SECRETARY

It has been my pleasure to serve on the DCPA Board of Directors for the past 10 years but it is now time for me to step away from my position for a while. I have gotten to know so many of you and I truly enjoy that! I love this organization and enjoy our meetings so much! We always have such great speakers.



I'm not going away....my life just has other things that need my priority right now. Please consider serving on the Board of Directors and being a part of the leadership of this great organization who work tirelessly for YOU! Thank you again for your support and I'll see you at the meetings!

Sincerely,  
Sheryl Curlee

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## UPDATES TO OUR WEBSITE

Did you see Rose-Mary Rumbley's piece on the history of the Missouri, Kansas, & Texas railroad in Dallas on our website? The M-K-T (more commonly known as the Katy) had a long history in our city and county and Rose-Mary tells their history as only she can. Read more here: [Katy Railroad in Dallas](#).

Did you see the many different theaters that served Dallas' Deep Ellum neighborhood a century ago? Some showed first-run movies, some showed second-run movies, some hosted traveling entertainers and vaudeville acts, but all were an important cultural addition to our city. Learn the names of these theaters on our website: [Deep Ellum Theaters](#).

And our recent piece about [Dallas' First Chinese Butcher](#), Charley Sing can be found on our site as well.

There's always something new and informative being added to our website so bookmark us and visit often. This is *your* association and we need your contributions to both our website and our newsletter. If your pioneer ancestor needs an online profile, please send an email to our [webmaster](#). Or if you'd like to contribute an interesting bit of pioneer history in our quarterly newsletter, hit us up at [newsletter@dallaspioneer.org](mailto:newsletter@dallaspioneer.org).

## LinkedIn Profile - Social Media

Thanks to everyone that follows DCPA on Instagram, Facebook, X (Twitter), and Tumblr. We've launched a new profile on LinkedIn which we're using to connect with other historical organizations and history lovers. Please connect with us the next time you're on LinkedIn!

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