



# DALLAS COUNTY PIONEER ASSOCIATION

*History Lives Here!*

SUMMER 2026

Next Meeting: 6/4/26 at 7pm



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### **It's Almost Summertime and as always, Dallas History Lives Here!**

We really appreciate everyone that attended our March meeting and enjoyed Ron Finch of the Waxahachie Historical Society share his research into the pioneer Bennett family and their descendants in Dallas. We'll have Ron's research material on our website sometime this summer. We also elected a new slate of officers at the March meeting to serve for the 2026-2027 term and our new Treasurer, David Underwood will introduce himself to you here later in this newsletter. During April, DCPA set up our booth and table at the AudeliaFest historical event in Lake Highlands and also at Oak Cliff Earth Day where we met a lot of new people. And our May 16 "Field Trip To Big Spring" introduced 48 people to the site that Dallas' founder John Neely Bryan last called home before his unfortunate February 1877 committal to the state mental hospital in Austin where he died that September. We've got three more historical "field trips" planned and will announce dates and locations soon!

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## **MEET SAM BEEMAN (1795-1877) Inaugural DCPA Member**

Although we're not sure if he was present at the first DCPA meeting on July 13th, 1875, Sam Beeman was recognized as an inaugural 1875 member in recognition of his arrival in Dallas County on November 1, 1846 following Beeman relatives that arrived five years earlier. Although lesser-known than the first 1841 Beemans, Sam served his country in the War of 1812 and eventually settled on acreage in Chisholm in nearby Rockwall County. He's buried there in the [Chisholm Cemetery](#).



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## **AUDELIAFEST**

We were delighted to participate in the second annual Audelia Fest in April at the Audelia Road Branch Library and celebrate the pioneer families of the Lake Highlands area that settled there when it was known as the "high prairie" above the White Rock Valley. Keynote speaker Robin Moss Norcross is a noted expert on Lake Highlands history and she maintains the excellent [McCree Cemetery](#) website which features photos of the area's first families. We hope to have Robin speak at a future DCPA meeting and share her pioneer knowledge with us.

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## **NEXT MEETING: JUN 4th 7pm**

We're looking forward to seeing you at our next quarterly meeting on Thursday June 4th. Our guest speaker is **Rick McCaslin**. Based in Denton, Rick will share with us the fascinating story of sculptor **Pompeo Luigi Coppini** and the six statues he created specifically for the 1936 Texas Centennial. The statues are located in the Hall of Heros at the Texas Building, which is the semicircular

entrance to the Hall of State. These sculptures are all still enjoyed by thousands of visitors ninety years later. Rick was recently appointed as the Texas State Historian by Governor Greg Abbott. A prolific author, Rick will also have his many books on various historical topics available for sale.

## POMPEO COPPINI

*Sculptor for the*  
**1936 Texas Centennial**



*Coppini statues in the Hall of Heros*



*Rick McCaslin*

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 enjoy a complimentary meal on us! Please make your dinner reservation by clicking the red 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.

[Make a Dinner Reservation](#)

## FAIR PARK RACETRACK

To attract visitors to the first State Fair of Texas in 1887, organizers focused on two things – horse racing and displays of farming implements. And this dual focus was a successful recipe until 1903 when the state legislature outlawed pari-mutuel betting on horse races.



Early photos of races at Fair Park are few & far between and the loss of racing played a large part in fair organizers selling the fairgrounds to the City in 1904. When the Cotton Bowl opened in 1930 on the infield of the old horse track, its press box was located on the west side in recognition of the racetrack's grand stand also being on the west side.



## SAM HOUSTON & SARAH RIDGE

*by Paul Ridenour*

After being at the Bur Oak Tree in the Big Spring Preserve, where Sam Houston camped, I decided to write about my wife Dottie's Cherokee ancestors and their friendship with Sam Houston.

Sam lived with the Cherokee and married a Cherokee woman named Tiana Rogers (also known as Diana or Tali hina). She is buried in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery.

Dottie's 3rd great grandmother was [Sarah \(Ridge\) Paschal Pix](#). She was almost full-blood Cherokee. Her father's name was The Ridge. His Cherokee name in English was "He Who Walks Along the Mountaintop" or "He Who Walks Along the Ridge." Whites shortened his name to Ridge or The Ridge. In the War of 1812 *Battle of Horseshoe Bend*, General Andrew Jackson made him a Major, thus known as Major Ridge after that. Major Ridge was a Cherokee town chief, a lawmaker, served as a Speaker on the Cherokee National Council, and helped draft the Cherokee Nation Constitution in 1827.



Sam Houston wanted to be on the Cherokee National Council, but the council deemed him too much of a drunk. The joke goes – "Not good enough for the Cherokee National Council is good enough for the President of the Republic of

Texas.” When Sam Houston was a Tennessee senator and between ages 30 and 34, Sarah Ridge was around age 9 and 13. During this period Sam took her around Washington DC in his carriage. Of course, he knew her most likely when she was born. The following is a quote from my wife's great grandfather who lived in Smith Point, TX (East Galveston Bay):

*"As a small girl (Sarah) on the plantation in Georgia, a frequent visitor of her father's (Major Ridge) was Congressman Sam Houston of Tennessee, who made quite a pet of the little girl. When he was in Washington attending Congress and Ridge would go there on tribal affairs, he would take little Sarah along in his carriage. Then the young Congressman would come to the boarding house and get his little friend, and they would go hand in hand over Washington to see the sights. As to the friendship between little Sarah Ridge and Sam Houston, that was renewed after Mrs. Paschal (Sarah) came to Texas in 1848 and has continued through Agnes (Paschal) McNeir (Sarah's daughter) and myself (Sarah's grandson), since her girlhood and my young manhood, back in 1903. The old General's daughter, Mrs. Nettie Houston Bringham, was a splendid lady, and her daughter, Nettie Houston Bringham, at sixteen was a lovely girl. So the families have been friends for over a hundred and forty years."*

- by Paschal McNeir, great grandson of Major Ridge.



Sarah Ridge's first cousin was Cherokee Confederate Brig. General Stand Watie, the last general to surrender in the Civil War. Stand Watie and Dottie are 1st cousins 5x removed. Dottie's Cherokee family are on at least 16 historical markers, monuments, museums, etc., in five states, and in 100s of books. Three of her family members were assassinated on the same day on June 22, 1839 – Major Ridge, his son John Ridge, and Stand's brother [Elias](#).

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*

### HAUGHT CEMETERY FIELD TRIP

Several Haught family members, including Linda Haught Ortega of Arizona, who gave the cry to save the Haught Store Cemetery from tax foreclosure, came a day early to visit the southeast Dallas County area, including the Old Town of Scyene, Salt Grass Steakhouse with the **Galloway Homestead** historical marker, the site of the Sam Bass train robbery, Pleasant Mound “Public” Cemetery, and **Haught Store Cemetery**. Linda is a descendant of Samuel A. Haught II and Millie Carrie Hunnicutt. We were thrilled to have them, along with Wayne W. Hunnicutt of New Mexico (a grandson of James Jasper Hunnicutt) and family join us again. For these Haughts and Hunnicutts, whose ancestors were associated by marriage and friendship, to meet for the first time at the Pioneer Picnic was very touching for history lovers. We distant cousins felt instant kinship in our hearts being from common roots and locations going back more than 200 years. Background on the Haught Store/Slapfoot Cemetery can be found in our archived [Winter 2025 Newsletter](#) and our [Summer 2025 Newsletter](#). Also, a BIG thanks to Tony Hanson on the [DGS website](#).



Our April **Pioneer Picnic** was indeed a social, educational, and historical event. DCPA officers were present, including **Historian M C Toyer** who was the speaker. He is a descendant of the Beeman, Dye, Glover, and Hunnicutt families. Additional descendants of some of the seven Hunnicutt siblings, who came to Dallas as pioneers were present, as were **Michael Glover**, **Tony Hanson** of Dallas Genealogical Society (DGS), and others.

**McKINNEY FAMILY CEMETERY** cleaning on Saturday, March 14, with **Dustin Durrett** as our leader was successful with the removal of a pecan tree limb that was crushing the top rail of the chain-link fencing. We cut vines and all saplings, clearing the way for mowing and removal of grass and vines on the tombstones. A recent drive-by showed the brush had been picked up and,

surprise, Johnson grass is three feet high. We are glad to have done this basic maintenance and made ready for other concerned citizens to pick up where we left off.

In April **Betsy Farris** followed up on the conditions around the **McAdams Cemetery** by going to the area, taking pictures, talking to proprietors of nearby businesses, and writing a great report that included the suggestion that we thank the Sonic manager for being a good citizen in attempting to keep the area safe. The manager was shocked when Betsy told her there is a cemetery in that location. Betsy said, "I didn't see any obvious encampments inside or near the cemetery. Maybe another work day can be planned or let volunteer folks know it should be clear for now. And patronize the Sonic for keeping an eye out for safety of the area."

### UPCOMING EVENTS

On **June 6th** is Dustin Durrett's visit to Garvin Cemetery. Details are on our [Event Page](#). I heard that our fellow member **Sheniqua Cummings**, also board member of Remembering Black Dallas, plans to attend and that a Cemetery Preservation Specialist from Texas Historical Commission has penciled in the date and will attempt to be there.



Our beloved Cemetery Lady, **Frances James**, gathered lists of the interred and they were compiled, but since that time one of our Cemetery Watchers, **Marilyn Kosanke**, has strengthened and corrected the lists and all are correctly reflected on Find-a-Grave. We believe the amount of space required to inter the number of known burials far exceeds the actual area recognized as a cemetery.

For locations of any cemeteries mentioned, please see our [Cemetery Page](#).

More photos can be found on our [Outings and Events Gallery](#).

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## NEW CENTURY COTTON MILL

*By Mike Magers*

New Century Cotton Mill, an ambitious project conceived around the turn of the twentieth century, was incorporated with the Texas Secretary of State in 1901. A public notice was reported in the San Antonio Express-News on June 4, 1901. The incorporators were Phillip Sanger, Thomas D. Miller, M. H. Turner, R. C. Ayers, J. E. Wiley, E. H. R. Green and Arnold B. Sanford. About two months later, a ceremony was held downtown just off the Houston & Texas Central rail line laying the cornerstone for the new enterprise's first building, slated to cost \$50,000. Grand Master J. W. McKinney of the grand lodge of negro Masons of Texas had come from Sherman to conduct the ceremony.



The festivities included a parade by Company A of the 25th United States Colored Infantry, organized as a "Buffalo Soldier" regiment after the Civil War. H. W. Scott was an African American businessman in Fort Worth who had operated grocery and general merchandise businesses. Phillip Sanger was one of the Sanger brothers who had set

up the Dallas mercantile business of the same name. Sanger was one of the backers of the Houston & Texas Central's expansion northward through Texas. Joseph E. Wiley was a local real estate investor and was known as the first formally educated African American lawyer in Texas. Other incorporators included Edward Green, son of eccentric investor Hetty Howland Green. Mr. Green had many interests, including railroads, and was an investor and philanthropist out of New York. Arnold B. Sanford of Boston was president of the American Cotton Yarn Exchange. Local investors were said to have included members of the Munger family, C. C. Slaughter, Pastor Alexander Stephens Jackson of New Hope Baptist Church and many others.

Construction soon began near the current site of Booker T. Washington High School between Flora Street, Juliette Street and the Houston & Texas Central rail lines. The property encompassed around four acres. The company endeavored to employ African American men and women. It operated for several years as one of the smaller cotton mills in Texas until its business dwindled to the point where bankruptcy loomed. New Century filed a petition for bankruptcy in early 1907 and the ambitious project ceased operations.

On February 7, 1907, the Fort Worth Record and Register reported that the Texas Savings Trust company had prevailed in its petition to the Fourteenth

District Court to have a receiver appointed in connection with the bankruptcy of New Century Cotton Mills. J. N. DuBoise was named as receiver. Later that year, Shwartz Brothers of Corsicana acquired the machinery of New Century Cotton Mills with a view to expanding its operation. A newspaper article on June 15, 1907 in the Houston Chronicle reported the transaction, stating that a brand new mill would be built in Corsicana with brick from Texas Fire Brick Company of Elgin. The new facility was to employ 200 people with a total payroll of about \$40,000. Although the New Century endeavor ultimately failed, it is noted for having been a cooperative multiracial effort, created to benefit the Dallas County African American community.

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## Ralph Fults From Prisons to Pulpits

by *Dustin Durrett*

Ralph Fults was born in **Anna, Texas** on January 23, 1911 to Audie B. Fults and Sophie Ruth Fults. Fults got into trouble early in life. At just 14 years old, he was arrested in Aspermont after being caught with stolen items. A week later, he escaped from jail by making a key out of an old tobacco can.



Before leaving, he unlocked the cells and let the other prisoners out too. He was caught again not long after.

Over the next several years, Fults kept getting arrested and escaping from prisons and reform schools across Texas. While locked up, he met future outlaw Clyde Barrow. The two became friends while serving time at Eastham Prison Farm.

In 1932, **Fults joined Clyde Barrow**, Bonnie Parker, and Ray Hamilton during an attempted robbery in Mabank. The robbery went bad after a night watchman raised the alarm. Bonnie and Fults were arrested while the others escaped.

Fults was sentenced to 10 years in prison but was pardoned in 1935 by Texas Governor Miriam "Ma" Ferguson. After getting out, he went right back to crime with Ray Hamilton. The pair robbed stores, stole cars and guns, and traveled across several southern states before Fults was captured again in 1935.

This time, he was sentenced to 50 years at Mississippi's tough Parchman prison farm.

But years later, Fults finally changed his life. After being pardoned in 1944, **he became a Christian** and started working at **Buckner Baptist Children's Home in Dallas**. He spent years talking to kids about staying out of trouble and avoiding the mistakes he made.

In 1960, Fults also helped create a television program called "Confession," which focused on helping former prisoners find jobs and rebuild their lives.

Ralph Fults died in Dallas on March 16, 1993, at the age of 82. He is buried at [Grove Hill Memorial Park](#).



## TUCKERVILLE

Between Garland & Rowlett

By Mike Judd

The pioneer area of "Tuckerville" along today's state highway 66 belonged to the prominent Tucker family for four generations. **Charles Masters Tucker** (1834-1898) came to the U.S. from Litton, Somerset County, England. His land holdings in northeast Dallas County eventually totalled 2,297 acres including the area from the Old Centerville and Castle Road area north and east of Merritt Road (south of Pleasant Valley) and back south to just north of Big A Road in Rowlett. All four of C.M. and Kibby Tucker's sons received 200 acres of their father's land when they were 20 years old. Elihu Henderson Tucker (1864-1961), Christopher Columbus "Lum" Tucker (1873-1942), Jessie Fitzgerald Tucker, and William Sidney Tucker.

Around 1900, oldest son Elihu "Dick" Tucker donated some of his allotment of land to establish the Tuckerville School – a one-room building in the middle of a pasture that educated forty children in grades 1 through 8. In later years, brothers Dick and Lum Tucker both moved into Garland and built adjacent houses on 11th Street. Tucker descendants remain in the area today and 62 acres of Tucker land along SH 66 (just east of today's Milano Hat Company in Garland) is now [Tuckerville Park](#).



Elihu "Dick" Tucker



Elihu Tucker's 7 Daughters

## THE GREAT TRINITY FOREST / BIG SPRING FIELD TRIP

By Brian Gunn

It was slated to be 90° degrees on Saturday, May 16, when we all met at The Great Trinity Forest for our Big Spring field trip, arranged and led by our **DCPA Historian MC Toyer**. The area is in southeastern Dallas County, very near Lake June & Hwy 175 and is owned by the City of Dallas. We were in the heart of Dallas' urban forest, which is one of the **largest urban hardwood forests** in the United States. Amazingly enough, the temperature under the canopy of trees was much cooler than expected. We gathered beneath the towering Bur Oak, its sprawling crown providing that welcome shade over Big Spring, where the sound of nearby trickling water fooled your senses into forgetting all about that heat.



Historic Bur Oak



DCPA Historian MC Toyer

At nearly **235 years old**, legend has it that this spot offered the same shade to **Sam Houston** and his Indian Treaty Delegation en route to sign the Treaty of Bird's Fort.

MC Toyer kicked things off with the history of the area, mentioning that at one time, **John Neely Bryan** lived in his cabin out here. We also heard from Master Naturalist **Marion Lineberry**, President of the Texas

Historic Tree Coalition, on the age and historical significance of the Bur Oak. Next up were Master Naturalists [Ben Sandifer](#) and [Richard Grayson](#), members of the [Texas Stream Team](#) and the [Aquatic Alliance](#), who shared illuminating insights from their ongoing testing of the spring's water chemistry. Their research suggests the spring is centuries old (think "Pilgrims") and likely served as a reliable



Ben Sandifer and Richard Grayson

water source for early pioneers/settlers in the area. Their findings align with the long-held understanding that Big Spring is the underground source that originally served other springs like Kidd Springs, Browder Springs, and Cedar Springs. While most of us recognize those names, few of us realize that they originally referred to *actual*, flowing natural springs that have since vanished

into the urban landscape. By scientifically documenting Big Spring's significance, Ben and Richard are helping build the case for its protection. Their work gives preservationists the evidence needed to ensure the city doesn't simply zone it away in favor of development, as has happened to so many irreplaceable places before it.

After hearing from the experts, the group fanned out to explore on their own. At the stepping stones crossing Bryan's Slough, we met up with [Alexander Neal](#), Program Specialist II with the Texas Water Resources



*Alexander Neal and Bill Holston*

Institute, and [Bill Holston](#), CEO of the Dallas Eviction Advocacy Center, who were preparing to push through chest-high brush toward the Trinity River.

Of our group, Paul Ridenour was the only one adventurous enough to join them, eager to see where Bryan's Slough met White Rock Creek

and ultimately the Trinity River. Paul and his "tour guides" followed the slough on foot until it reached White Rock Creek, putting them in view of where it meets the Trinity River. Rumor had it there was a beaver dam out there also, which made the trek all the more worthwhile.

Needless to say, the combination of nature, history, and discovery made for a truly enjoyable outing, and I, for one, left eager to return.

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## FRANCIS NEANDER OLIVER

### Oak Cliff's First Newspaper

*by Mike Judd*

The sale of residential lots in Thomas L. Marsalis' new planned city of Oak Cliff began on November 1, 1887 with a live auction. The highest bidder was allowed to pick the very first lot subject to payment of a quarter of the total purchase price in cash on the spot. Bidding on that coveted first lot began at \$500.00 and rose in hundred dollar increments until Francis N. Oliver's high bid of \$1,250.00 was accepted. The newspaper publisher from Pilot Point, Texas bought the town's first lot at Tenth and Jefferson and founded Oak Cliff's first newspaper on the site - The Oak Cliff Sunday Weekly.



*Francis Neander Oliver*

Mr. Oliver next helped found Oak Cliff Methodist Church a bit farther down Jefferson and also served as Oak Cliff's second mayor. As Oak Cliff's first residents, Francis and Mollie Oliver welcomed four children – including a son they named Clifton in honor of their hometown. After Mollie's untimely 1900 passing, Mr. Oliver sold the newspaper the following year and relocated to Lockney in the Panhandle where he founded another newspaper – The Lockney Beacon. In 1907 he married a local woman named Emily Jane Scarborough and had two more daughters, eventually serving as a local Justice of the Peace. Mr. Oliver died in 1927 and is buried there. The Lockney Beacon is still published today.

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## THE MUMMIFIED MAN

*by Dustin Durrett*

Came across a wild story on Find a Grave about Anderson McCrew, better known as "The Mummified Man," and knew I had to go check it out for myself. So I headed out to Lincoln Memorial Cemetery to find his grave and learn more about the strange history behind it.

In 1913, while passing through Marlin, McCrew was badly injured after falling from a moving train. Some stories say he already had a wooden peg leg before the accident, which may have caused him to lose his balance. Either way, the accident left him badly hurt, and he later bled to death near the tracks.

His body was taken to local mortician James Washington. Since nobody came to claim him, Washington used what was said to be a special embalming fluid that preserved McCrew's body unusually well. At first, the mortician placed him in the funeral home window hoping someone would recognize him and contact authorities. Imagine walking down the street and seeing a preserved body sitting in a window display. Different times for sure.

After about a year, nobody claimed Anderson McCrew. Instead of burying him, the mortician sold the body to a traveling carnival that had come through town. That's where the story takes a really strange turn.

The carnival dressed McCrew in a black tuxedo, sat him in a chair, and displayed him as "The Amazing Petrified Man." People paid money just to stare at him. For decades, his body traveled from town to town with carnival sideshows across the country. Some places even advertised him as "The Eighth Wonder of the World."



After the carnival business faded away in the late 1960s, McCrew's body ended up forgotten in a warehouse in Dallas. Eventually a woman named Elgie Pace discovered him and felt he deserved a proper burial. She kept his remains stored in her basement until a local funeral director agreed to bury him for free in 1973 at Lincoln Memorial Cemetery.

For years the grave had no marker until Don McLean released the song The Legend of Andrew McCrew, which brought attention to the story and helped raise money for a headstone.

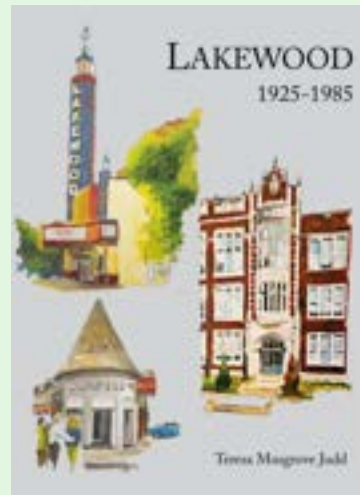
The marker reads:

Andrew McCrew  
"The Mummified Man"  
Born 1867 | Died 1913 | Buried 1973  
Traveled for 60 years after Death  
as a circus attraction

## BOOK REVIEW Lakewood 1925-1985

*Teresa Musgrove Judd - 480 pages*

After ten years of diligent research, the most complete and accurate history of the Lakewood Shopping Center's first sixty-years is now complete. In honor of her late father who watched the Lakewood Theater being built in 1937, the author tells the story of the shopping center from its 1925 beginnings when it was first developed on land situated inside the country club's front entrance.



The book is packed with original photos and first-hand accounts from business owners and their descendants up through 1985. It's an encyclopedic directory of every business that occupied the various sections of the shopping center during its first 60 years. The book also has special sections for the most beloved public structures in Lakewood including the neighborhood's best-loved schools and churches. Did you know that long before the Dixie House's long run at 6400 Gaston Avenue, the space was occupied by a glamorous supper club with live music called "The Chalet"? Are your grandparents in some of the photos of well-dressed couples drinking and dancing there? Did you know that the limestone office building across from the Lakewood Theater was once the Lakewood branch library and before that a Cabell's Ice Cream parlor? This colorful book is a must-have for lovers of East Dallas and its history.

## SOCIAL MEDIA - LINKEDIN

Thank you to everyone that follows DCPA on [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [Facebook](#). 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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