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THE PATHFINDER

The Historical Preservation Journal of Westlake

Editor
Joyce Gibson Roach

The PathFinder is a publication of the Westlake Historical Preservation Board.

The editor welcomes articles and comments relating to the history of Westlake and Northeast Tarrant County addressed to: Westlake Historical Preservation Board
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Margie Adkins Graphic Design

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EDITOR'S PAGE

Arthur McWhirter

The name of Westlake's new historical journal evokes images of roads – pathways – and those who find and travel roads – pathfinders. We all travel roads – real and imagined. Everyone my age remembers Richard Halliburton's wonderful travel narrative *The Royal Road to Romance*, and we like to think of our publication as a road – to romance, adventure, and discovery. And we are the pathfinders.

The image of the journey is one of the oldest storytelling frameworks, informing literature, song and story from age to age.

Citizens of the Roman Empire boasted, "All roads lead to Rome." The word highway was in use in Colonial times and highwaymen came "riding, riding, riding, up to the old inn door" or sometimes up to no good. Lewis and Clark were the first trailblazers to imprint the national consciousness as they found a way to the Pacific Northwest. Daniel Boone and his ilk forged new ways into the unknown. Wagon wheels left rutted maps across uncharted territory. Scouts for the military "cut sign," reading the landscape to find the way West.

And there is James Fennimore Cooper's fictional hero, Natty Bumpo, in one novel called the Pathfinder, because of his ability to locate the trails, traces and passages through the wilderness or, if need be, mark a new way through the wilds. He is the American, archetypal hero of the first order reminding us of those who took the course of empire westward, pursuing Manifest Destiny.

Davy Crockett struck out from Tennessee, Old Betsy in hand, to see what new paths lay open for him in Texas and paid an awful price to find out. The Raven, whose paleface name was Sam Houston, fared better, and never lost his identity as path-seeker for the new republic.

Closer to home, Westlake is bounded by local historic passageways founded by cowboys, cavalry and commerce – pathfinders all. On the west lay the Eastern Cattle Trail that loosely followed I-35 out of Fort Worth to join the Chisholm Trail. To the east is Preston Road in Dallas, part of Highway 289, remaining as a segment of the Old Military Road that was supposed to connect from the Red River to Austin, but got only as far as Cedar Hill. Dove Road, passing through the heart of Westlake, stood as the earliest road in the county linking Grapevine to Roanoke and to rural economic prosperity.

The image of the journey is one of the oldest storytelling frameworks, informing literature, song and story from age to age. The final volume of Leonard Woolf's autobiography is titled *The Journey not the Arrival Matters*. Life is a journey, and our journal title, The PathFinder, mirrors the life we live in Westlake – and in the world.

Westlake is also on a journey toward its own destiny that will be unlike any other of the towns around it – better, richer because Westlake will take into account its past in charting its future.

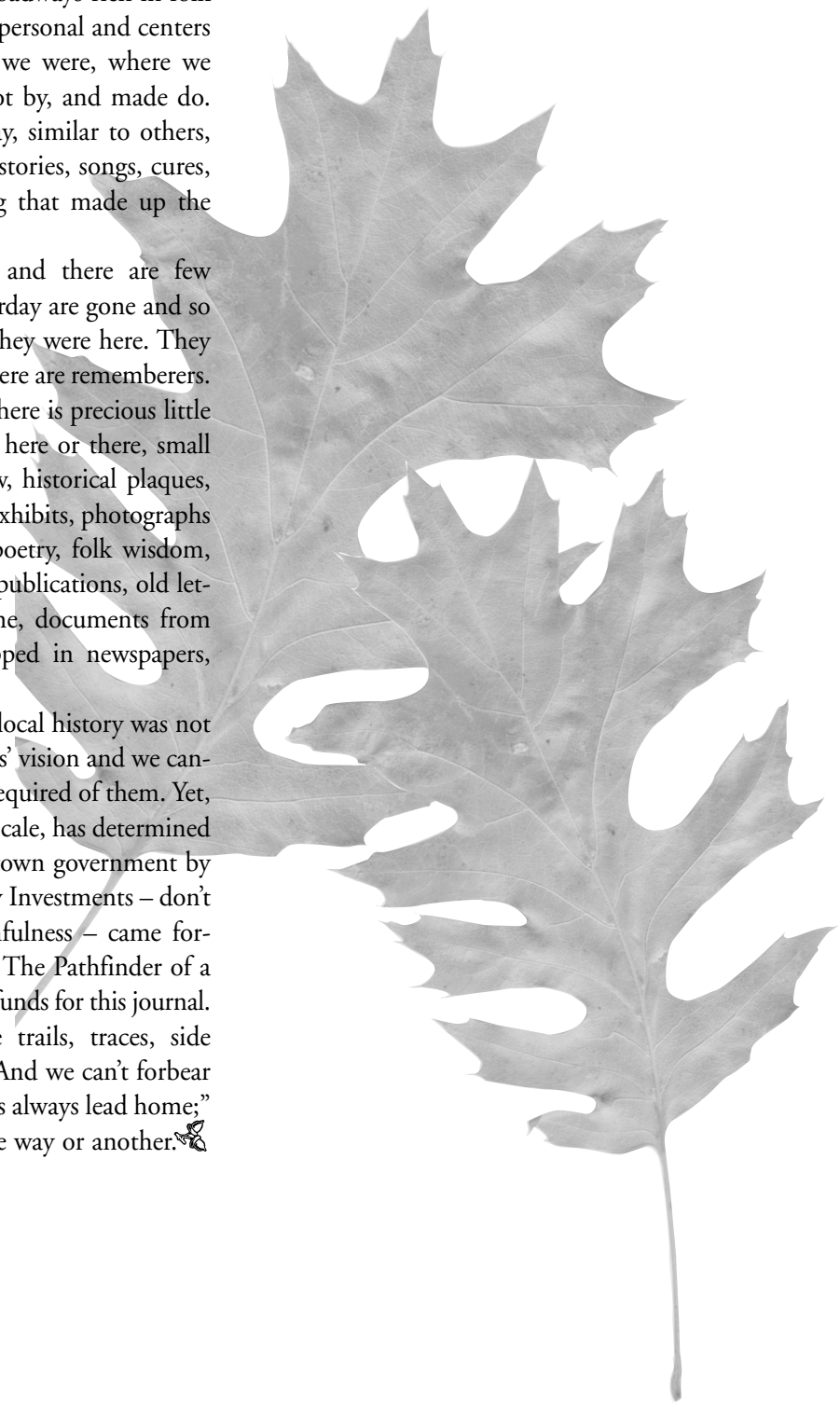
The town is bordered in roadways rich in folk history. Such history is intensely personal and centers first on the family saga – who we were, where we came from, how we got here, got by, and made do. Each family had its own pathway, similar to others, and littered with "begets," tales, stories, songs, cures, religion, arts, and ways of being that made up the social history of itself.

But pathways grow dim and there are few pathfinders left. The folk of yesterday are gone and so is most of the evidence proving they were here. They are remembered only as long as there are rememberers. When even memories are gone, there is precious little – an old house or rock chimney here or there, small cemeteries with headstones askew, historical plaques, old-timey things in museums or exhibits, photographs which return our stare, bits of poetry, folk wisdom, recipes and patterns from fragile publications, old letters with the musty smell of time, documents from court house records, words trapped in newspapers, magazines or books.

Preserving and conserving local history was not necessarily part of the early settlers' vision and we cannot find fault, given all that was required of them. Yet, Westlake, a new town in an old locale, has determined that history will have a place in town government by creating a historical board.Fidelity Investments – don't forget that "fidelity" means faithfulness – came forward to lead the way, to become The Pathfinder of a new age, by generously providing funds for this journal.

We invite you along the trails, traces, side roads, and by-ways of long ago. And we can't forbear to remind you that "the best paths always lead home;" that we are all pathfinders, in one way or another.

Joyce Gibson Roach,
Editor



From the Mayor of Westlake

COMMENTS

Case Photography

To fully understand the significance of the community we enjoy today, we must know how we got here – to understand and appreciate the circumstances of those who many years ago made decisions that ultimately affected what our community would become. And so it is important that we record the history of our community and tell the stories of the early settlers so that those who follow may trace the community's roots through us. A generous gift from Fidelity Investments is making this inaugural journal possible.

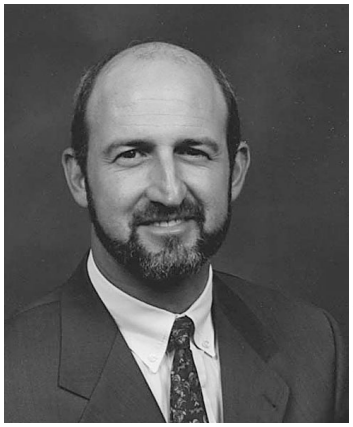
The Town's governing body has acted wisely, I think, in creating the Westlake Historical Preservation Board as an integral part of government and charging the Board to rediscover and record our history.

By making this task one of the elementary functions of our government, the Board of Aldermen has ensured that whoever succeeds us will know the importance we place on preserving our heritage.

Today, the Town is taking many innovative and bold steps such as establishing the Westlake Academy – the first charter school ever awarded in Texas to a town – to make certain that our community will stay on the path of making history as well as writing it.

Scott Bradley,
Mayor of Westlake

From the Town Manager



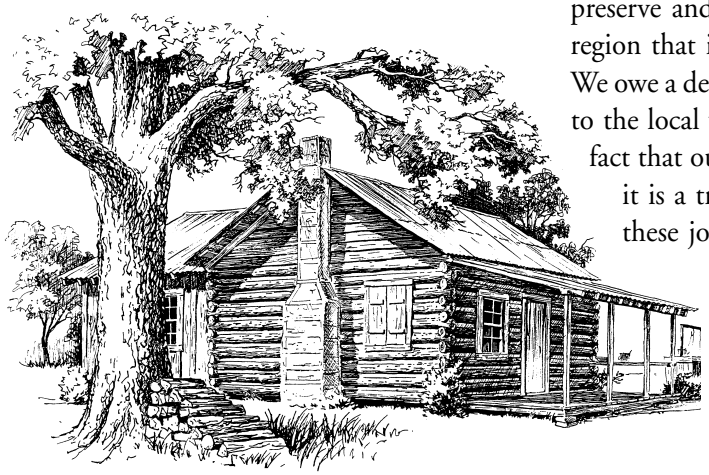
Case Photography

THOUGHTS

There are few gifts more taken for granted than our heritage. We've all kept the old photographic albums or maybe even been fortunate enough to have recovered a piece of wood from the house our great-grandmother was born in. Apart from the relics and stories passed down from generation to generation, there is little effort made in today's frantic world to preserve and protect our community heritage. As we grow older, few of us have not paused on occasion and wished that certain memories could somehow be crafted and professionally woven into a legacy rather than relegated to the yellowing pages of the picture album.

With such thoughts in mind, The Westlake Historical Preservation Board was created to discover, preserve and perpetuate the history of our town and region that is, after all, composed of family histories. We owe a debt of gratitude to Fidelity Investments and to the local volunteers whose work herein reflects the fact that our past is as much a guide to our future as it is a trail to our present. The work begins with these journals. It is a wonderful beginning to an effort that, God willing, will last the ages.

Trent Petty
Town Manager



Reese Kennedy, *Built in Texas*,
Texas Folklore Society, with permission

Fidelity Investments
faithful to its neighbors

by Emily Kinney

In 1983, Fidelity Investments® established its Southwest regional operations with fewer than one hundred employees. As its first major expansion outside of Boston, Fidelity chose the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex because of its geographically central location and the availability of quality workers. Since then, more than twenty Fidelity companies, most notably customer service and technology organizations, have located some portion of their operations in North Texas. The region now employs approximately 3,200 Dallas-Fort Worth area residents.

Due to its expected growth, Fidelity found it necessary to expand its Southwest site to include a new regional headquarters building. Though several locations were considered, Westlake was the top choice because of its proximity to a quality workforce and because of the bucolic setting.

Fidelity's Westlake campus is situated on 332 acres of picturesque land, consisting of a 214-acre portion of Circle T Ranch formerly owned by Ross Perot Jr.'s Hillwood Development Corporation, the one hundred-acre Paigebrooke Farm formerly owned by Mr. and Mrs. Scott Bradley, and eighteen acres purchased from Maguire Partners. The campus boundaries are Dove Road to the south, Highway 114 to the north, Circle T Ranch to the west and Precinct Line Road to the east. The acreage, which includes heavily wooded areas, wetlands, grassy plains and two ponds, supports abundant natural wildlife and the company's herd of longhorn cattle.

"We could not have asked for a more beautiful community for our new regional headquarters," said Doug Reed, Southwest site general manager. "The peaceful surroundings promote the healthy work environment we want to provide to our employees."

One of Fidelity's goals was to create a design palette to fit with the Southwest. The design stresses the importance of maintaining a natural landscape by having a minimal effect on the environment surrounding the campus. Prior to the start of construction, thousands of trees were tagged and catalogued in an effort to preserve the history and character of the site and reduce the amount of disruption to the landscape. The building's exterior design was inspired by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin. The campus features native materials, including Texas stone.

"Great care was taken to preserve the natural landscape and environment during construction," said Jack Mourning, senior director for Fidelity Corporate Real Estate. "In the end, the building became an integrated and harmonious part of the landscape rather than an intrusion."

The facility, which also includes a state-of-the-art cafeteria and employee fitness center, currently houses approximately 1,200 employees, who relocated to the new offices from Irving between January and April, 2001. Fidelity still maintains operations in Irving, with 900 employees, in addition to Dallas, which has 1,100 employees.

Fidelity's new campus also preserves small pieces of Texas history. The training and conference rooms throughout the building are named after famous Texas people, cities, counties or landmarks. Employees took it upon themselves to add descriptions to the rooms named after famous Texans, including a photo and summary of that person's significance in Texas history.

"Our employees who are native Texans got the chance to brush up on their state history, and those who come from out of state learned something about their new home," said Mike Mlinac, executive vice president in Fidelity's Emerging Corporate Markets group. "We liked the idea so much, we had the histories laminated and display them outside the rooms. Now there's a sense of history, even though the rooms are new."

Fidelity's commitment to the Metroplex has been demonstrated by its support of a wide variety of nonprofit organizations in the area. Since 1983, the Fidelity Foundation has awarded grants to such recipients as The Child Care Group, Dallas Zoological Society, Performing Arts Fort Worth, and YMCA, among others.

Fidelity employees gave more than 8,500 hours of volunteer time and manpower in 2001 to company-sponsored projects such as American Heart Association, Child Protective Services, North Texas Food Bank, and others. Also, as part of its community relations outreach, Fidelity Southwest has adopted public schools: Keyes Elementary School in Irving, Spence Middle School in Dallas, and the Northwest Independent School District. Fidelity employees tutor and mentor students, as well as hold special events, such as school supply drives, to benefit the schools.

In 1999, Fidelity Southwest volunteers were awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award for Corporations by the Volunteer Center of Dallas County and also received the ATPE Crystal Apple Award for outstanding volunteer work at Keyes Elementary School. In 2000, Fidelity Southwest was also awarded the Governor's Volunteer Award in the Business/Corporation Category.

"We have truly enjoyed our first year as members of the Westlake community," said Reed. "I know that our partnership with the town and its citizens will only become stronger as time passes."

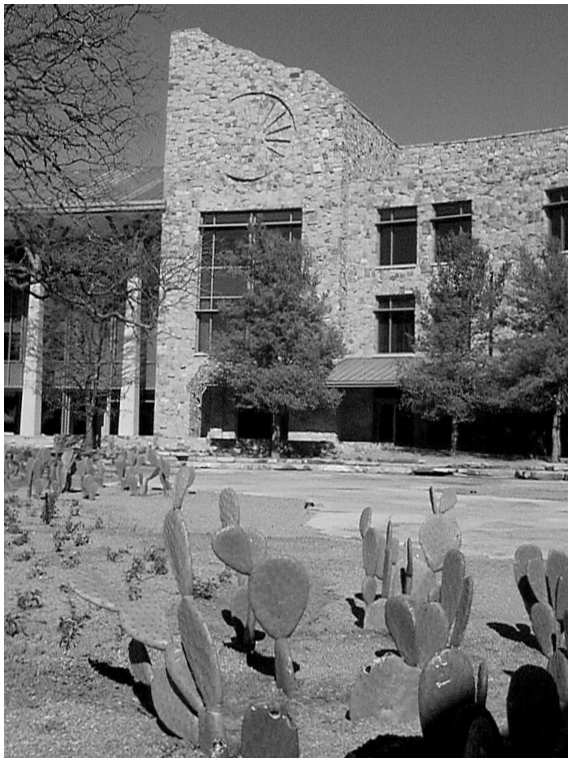
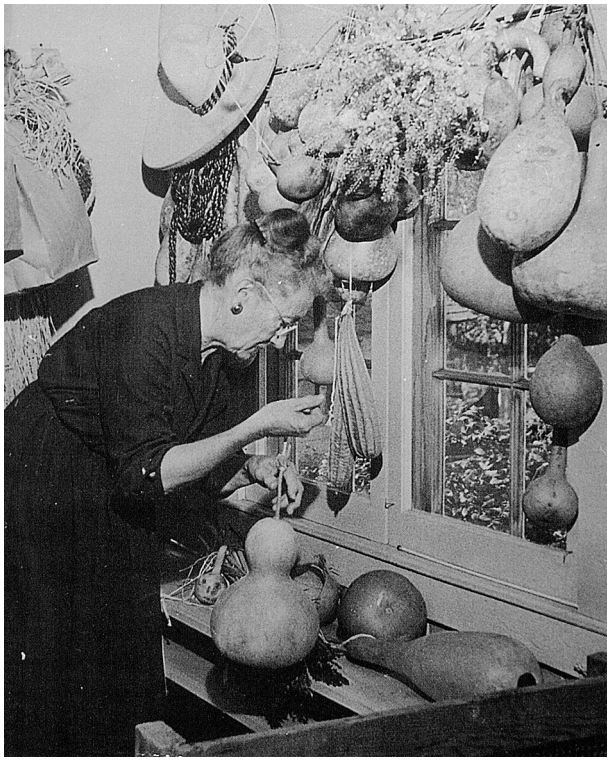


Photo courtesy of Fidelity Investments

Emily Kinney is Assistant Communications Manager at Fidelity Investments.

First Lady of the Timbers

by Joyce Gibson Roach

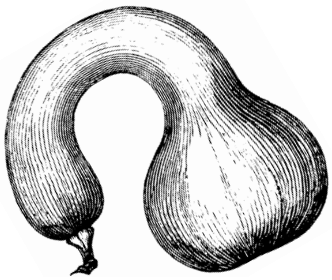


Lyda Smith White was, until the time of her death in 1981, the first lady of local history in this area. For many, she existed in her husband's shadow and Hugh White's reputation was real enough as rancher, landowner and businessman. White family land holdings included a turkey farm adjacent to Westlake sitting just south of the Thornton homestead and bordering both the Old Roanoke and Mount Gilead roads and other parcels of land that stretched to Blue Mound.

I came to know Lyda in a different capacity beyond that of helpmate and community-oriented lady. She was born in 1895 in The Territory, before it was called Oklahoma. Her father was a pioneer cattleman there. Her own story included tales of her playmates, cowboys and Osage Indians, and was as colorful as any she collected later. But her personal passion became the gathering of local history of Northeast Tarrant County. This she did for half a lifetime. Not only did Lyda collect genealogical information, but listened and wrote down family stories, crafting some of them into narratives based on both facts and reminiscences. She also collected photographs and recorded the social history of schools, churches, businesses and organizations.

Lyda enlisted the advice and guidance of the Texas State Library Association on how to go about her writing in factual style without flowery embellishments. Her education and experience as a teacher enabled her to leave those accounts in handwriting reflecting the excellent penmanship of her day. Without her files, much of the history of the area would be lost. But for her work as a folk-historian and folklorist using both primary and secondary sources, this publication would be the poorer. At her request and upon her death, her files were put in my hands to use in behalf of historical publication and preservation.

Another interest of Lyda's was gourds. She collected them from other places, cultivated them and turned them into useful items based on their uses in frontier times.



Plascido, The Old Rock House, The Stagecoach Stop

by Stephen Thornton

Photo, Stephen Thornton

Some places transcend time, while others help define it. A frontier cottage in the southwest corner of Westlake does both. About a half-mile northeast of what used to be a settlement called Double Springs, is a cottage located on the southeast corner of a thirty-acre tract now called Stagecoach Farm. The cedar shingled dwelling was probably one of the first to be built out of the local rock in the area. It is strategically nestled in the edge of the Cross Timbers. To the west is open prairie and the setting sun often casts streaks of gold on this frontier homestead surrounded by significant numbers of virgin post oaks.

The Naming of the Cottage:

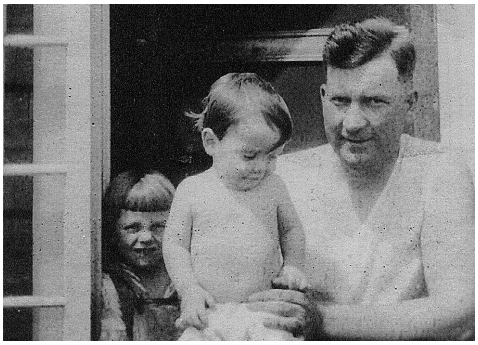
This quaint cottage commonly has had several names. The postal records identify a place around this site as Plascido, probably meaning a tranquil or peaceful place. A stagecoach line ran north and south between Denton and Birdville. It is said that someone from the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* flew over this area of Westlake, now a development known as Stagecoach Hills, in the 1940s or 50s and took photos that may have revealed the old ruts and trails of the stage line, but nothing is known of the photos now.

Another, and perhaps more common name, was "the old rock house" as remembered by Mrs. Alice Grimes, who was born in 1880 and lived in the home as a little girl with her grandfather, Henry Keller who built the home, and her father, Bob Keller. "The Thornton house" became a popular name since it had been in my family since my grandparents, Stephen and Jacel Thornton, purchased the cottage from a close friend, Dr. Harold V. Johnson, in 1916. On July 23, 1917, their second son and my father, Harold Thornton, was born upstairs in the cottage and named for Dr. Johnson.

LaVana Thornton, my mom, visited my grandmother and her future mother-in-law, Jacel Cain Thornton, at the cottage in 1946 when she first knew Dad. They married in 1947 and eventually moved to the home in 1956, four months after I was born. Our family usually referred to the cottage as "the farm house" because of the cattle, chickens, crops and fruits raised and grown here, but to most of the locals in recent decades, the name, "the old stagecoach stop" has been used. Mother recalls that from the very first of her visits, many of her older friends told her stories about the place: "The stories were always the same and never varied. My older friends had well-established views on the home's usage."

Stories from the Cottage:

My mother has told me of the fox hunts she remembered that were still being held in the late 1940's. "Late at night, we could hear the dogs barking. From Roanoke, the hunts seemed to go southeast toward Westlake, Twin Springs, and Southlake," she said.



My father, Harold, on my grandfather's knee, and my uncle behind them; taken at the west back door of the cottage in 1918.

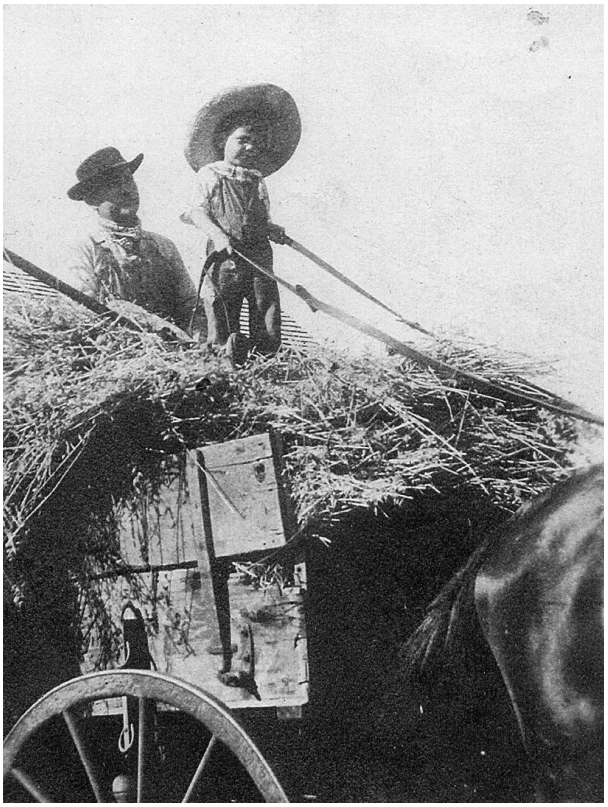
One frequently told story was that "one-day the stage was held up and robbed, and the gun toting robbers hastily buried the gold out by the pig pens." Mom remembers some of those friends telling the tale of coming out to the place with their dads looking for gold, rumored to have been buried at the base of a post of a hog pen. Another version of the buried gold tale involved two robbers who took a shipment of gold from a bank and, realizing that they were probably going to get caught on the way up to Denton, hid the gold. As the story went, one robber was killed soon into the chase and the other one shot, but he told the pursuing sheriff where the gold was buried before he died. The gold in this story, if ever found, was never officially reported.

My dad would say that he dreaded when the gold hunts followed a new round of rumors. He reflected on the times when my grandfather, a train engineer, would come all the way home from his work in Fort Worth to "find holes dug all over the farm." They would also come home from a Saturday in town and find the sandy loam dug up. This went on for years." He recalled watching his father spend the end of his day filling up holes and "intensely verbalizing" his feelings while the sun set. My grandfather told my dad that the only thing more demeaning and depressing was when he plowed the farm on a hot day behind a mule.

Dad had other memories of those days such as riding horseback to Keller School and being teased for being the only boy who wore shoes in school. He remembered the building of the recreation center in 1933 by the Civil Works Administration. He also said the boys and girls were segregated from each other and during recess the young boys really didn't know what to do with the girls except trip them on occasion or throw rocks at them.

My dad developed part of the farm into The Stagecoach Hills Addition in 1971. The western part of the original farmland is used as an airstrip by the development today. When Dad died in 1994 in his home, known as "the lake house," he was only a few hundred feet from his place of birth. His ashes were scattered from a plane over the airstrip and the cottage.

Another child raised on the family estate was my father's older brother, the second Stephen William Thornton, known as S.W. The family remembers he was the talk of the town – the town's best athlete, class clown, and always getting into things that challenged his parents. I could tell that my father idolized his brother. My uncle was killed when he was fourteen, run over by a wagon while working on a farm in the Roanoke area. The family was devastated and I don't think my father ever got over it.



My grandfather and uncle, S. W. Photo taken around 1917.

Information About the Cottage:

My mother recalls that when she first came to the farm, it was known that Henry Keller and his son built the house. In 1959, Mrs. Alice Keller Grimes visited the farm and gave information about it as she remembered it. She lived in the house with her grandfather when she was four years old. Her grandfather who had come from Bonham, in Fannin County, Texas, and father, Robert (Bob) Keller, built the rock portion of the house. Mrs. Grimes recalled that the kitchen was extended to include the well, which is still present. Mrs. Grimes was seventy-eight years old in 1959.

In 1971, when Mrs. Grimes was ninety-one years old, Mother and my sister, Janet Lynn Tracy, visited Mrs. Grimes. Mrs. Grimes recounted again her fond memories of her time at "the old rock house" where the horses were watered at the springs in the back. She said the rocks that were used to build the house came from the pasture. Her family attended church at Mount Gilead Baptist Church, built sometime around 1850. Henry Keller was born in 1843 and he and his wife, Rachel, both originally from Missouri, are buried in the Mount Gilead cemetery. Bob Keller was born May 11, 1862 and he and his wife are buried in the Bourland cemetery.

Most other homes of that time, from the 1850's to 1880's, were log cabins, some of which were moved from Double Springs to the settlement of Athol, now Keller, when the railroad came through the region. Approximately eighty-five feet northeast of the cottage, and closer to the road, was a log cabin built before the cottage. It was later used as living quarters for the working hands of the farm after the cottage's construction. There is presently flagstone padding and some masonry on the site that might have been used as the flooring of the cabin or for an adjoining porch added at a later time.

Other structures have come and gone over time. A chicken coop was erected about sixty-five years ago and was likely replaced by a bigger chicken house

about fifty years ago. Part of the chicken house is still intact and my wife, Paula, and I live there. We still call it "The Chickenhouse" which seems to create all kinds of images in peoples' minds. A two-story storage building was located just to the northwest of the cottage and was torn down about forty years ago. A windmill sat northwest of the cottage. Grandmother was an artist and made architectural drawings of a 10 x 10 extension on the east side of the cottage and a two car detached garage to the southwest of the cottage that she hoped to build.

North side of "the chickenhouse." Child is Kay Palmer; taken in the early 1930s

Describing the Cottage:

"The old rock house" has walls eighteen inches thick constructed of local ironstone and sandstone that encompass the present "living room". A type of masonry stucco was later applied to the sides that may have helped to preserve not only the walls, but also the detail found in the mud such as animal hair, twigs and charcoal. A two-story portico-like screened porch was known to be on the south and east sides of the cottage in the early 1920s.

The western portion of the house had a kitchen that originally extended further north to enclose the existing well – this reported by Alice Grimes. In the early 1930s, my grandparents divorced, but my grandmother stayed at the home place. She married Franz Schubert, a Frenchman who owned a piano shop in south Fort Worth. They designed the western section of the house. The addition was torn down and replaced with a new kitchen, dining room and bathroom with a sandstone-flagstone floor and a European style of architecture. The kitchen has a counter made of a single piece of pine twenty-two inches wide and over nine feet long. Along the eastern wall of the kitchen is a wood burning cooking stove, and a Dutch door. The corner fireplace in the dining room sits a couple of feet off the floor and has a cast iron swinging arm for cooking.

The living room has recessed shelving made with knotted pine and a tongue and groove pine floor supported by two logs. On the north side of the living room wall is a mural started by Grandmother in 1956. She is believed to have died of heart failure the evening she started the mural. She had lived in the home for forty years. I'd like to finish her mural some day.

Dating the Cottage:

Even though it is believed that "The Stagecoach Stop" was constructed between 1866 to sometime in the 70s, there is no official documentation presently known showing the actual dates. The records of the cottage probably burned in the fire of 1876 that destroyed the Tarrant County records when the county seat was in Birdville. After the fire, the records were housed in the Tarrant County courthouse in Fort Worth. However, Ft. Worth Title shows the original 480 acres of land purchased from V.J. and Louisa Hulton by Thomas Walden in 1863. Walden became the postmaster of nearby Double Springs in 1875. On November 13, 1880, Henry Keller purchased the estate from Mrs. S. F. Perry. It is thought that she had Henry and Bob build the home years earlier. The 1880 Tarrant County census shows that Henry was thirty-seven years old and Bob was seventeen. Bob Keller received the title in 1903. Whether or not they were any kin to the Perry family is not known.

The most curious aspect about the cottage involves the Stage Star Route # 7987. In 1854, a

stagecoach route was contracted by the Postal Service to run between Denton and Birdville. Mr. E.I. Wiesman compiled a map based on the information given by the postal records in the national archives showing the Stage Star Route #7987 beginning at Denton, going six miles south to Alton, which was then the county seat of present day Denton county; then heading south twelve miles south/southwest to Mud Spring, located on Denton Creek east of what is now Highway 377. The route continues six miles to a place named Plascido before continuing another twelve miles to Birdville, the county seat of Tarrant before it was moved to Fort Worth. Mr. Wiesman said about Plascido: "Everything seems to point to this site, [the Stagecoach Stop] the distance and direction,

Photo, Stephen Thornton

and I'd bet money on this location but I've found nothing conclusive yet on this place." Records also show Stage Star Route # 8712 was discontinued to Plascido on August 18, 1858, and to Alton on May 5, 1859. If Mrs. Grimes is correct about who built the cottage, it would have been built after the stage runs. It may have been that the log cabin was the actual place where Thomas Walden and others lived.

Conclusion:

This cottage represents the frontier days of struggles and dreams gone like a whirlwind in our local time-line, never to be repeated. Its location was useful in giving passers-by much needed water from the springs. It was recognized for serving to link one settlement to the next by providing passenger and mail service. More important, it has been home to my kids, Candice and Jeffrey, the fourth generation of Thorntons, just as it nurtured generations before us. The western portion of the cottage has recently been used as a Montessori preschool classroom known as "The School at Stagecoach Stop."

The cottage has served the community well. It survived the vagaries of weather, neglect, remodeling and change. Its country charm invites people to reflect on its simplicity and depth of character. Even if the stagecoaches used the site before the cottage, before the county seats, before the Civil War, the richness remains as part of Plascido, truly a place of peace and sanctuary for me.

Notes:

Double Springs has since been called Twin Springs when a developer re-named the area. Property on the north side of Robin Drive at the site of the springs is now known as Samantha Springs, in memory of Joe and Carolyn McCombs' daughter, and it produces commercial spring waters from the re-discovered and developed source.

For many years prior to development, the property belonged to Dutch Cook who had a truck farm on the site. He was well known for his tomatoes.

Stephen Thornton is Co-Chairperson of Westlake's Tree-City USA committee, and a Westlake Historical Preservation Board member.

Ruth Baker Survey showing progression of ownership of the Thornton property

Ruth Baker Survey Abstract #108, Patent 205, 480 Acres, Certificate #365 Vol.2

2/5 1863	V.J. Hulton & Wife Louisa (L.L.) to: Thomas Walden 480 acres
1869	Thomas Walden to: C. & M.A. Lipscomb Fort Worth Title Company (Kermit Westmoreland)
July 18, 1870	C. & M.A. Lipscomb to: Mrs. S.F. Perry Fort Worth Title Company (Kermit Westmoreland)
Nov.30, 1880	Mrs. S.F. Perry to: Henry Keller Fort Worth Title Company (Kermit Westmoreland)
1863	Thomas Walden Refilled [sic] 1881) Fort Worth Title Company (Kermit Westmoreland)
Feb. 13, 1903	J.H. Keller Fort Worth Title Company (Kermit Westmoreland)
11-21, 1908	R.J. McCain to: W.B. Root & Wife Mary Fort Worth Title Company (Kermit Westmoreland)
Oct. 22, 1909	W.R. Root & Wife Mary to: W.H. Yardel (or Yandale) Ft. Worth Court House, Vol. 337, P-672 *
	W.H. Yardel to: J.H. Powell Vol. 404, p. 55
9/25/1916	J.H. & Annie E. Powell to: Dr. Harold V. Johnson Vol. 404, P 55
1916	Dr. Harold V. Johnson to: Stephen W. Thornton

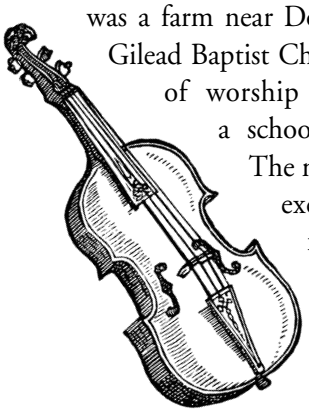
Title research by E.I. Wiesman

* *Note: survey gives W.B. and W.R. Root; which initials are correct is unknown*

Henry Keller, Alice Keller Grimes' grandfather to whom reference is made in Stephen Thornton's article as having owned "the stagecoach stop" place for some years, has a rich history in the Westlake area. Following is a narrative concerning the family written by Lyda White, local historian. (See Lyda White story, p 8)

"Henry Keller, a Confederate veteran, was the son of a German immigrant who settled in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, and reared a family there. From this family, Henry and a brother, Philip, came to Texas as single men, settling first in Fannin County. While in that county, Henry was married to Rachael Sebastian, daughter of Andrew and Elizabeth Sebastian. They were the parents of five children: 1) Robert Valentine, 2) Ike, 3) Alice, 4) Nannie, 5) Isora A.

The family moved from Fannin County to Tarrant County about 1869, when Robert V., the eldest son, was seven years old. Their first home was a farm near Double Springs. Mount Gilead Baptist Church served as a place of worship on Sunday, and as a schoolhouse on weekdays. The men of the family were excellent fiddlers, and furnished music for many of the social gatherings.



Much of the country was still unfenced. Cattle and other livestock grazed the open range together. When a beef was butchered, the meat was divided among neighbors. Indians roamed the area, but few raids were made on the settlements. There were no paved roads, and all transportation was done by horse-drawn wagons. Cotton had to be hauled about thirty-two miles to a gin in Dallas where the nearest railroad was located.

The Keller family's next move was to a farm north [of Double Springs] known later as the Thornton place. As was their custom, they continued to be good neighbors, extending help and a warm welcome to other settlers coming into the area. One such newcomer was Arthur Pulliam from Murphreesboro, Tennessee, who found his first home in Texas with the Keller family. Years later, in 1887, he named his first son, Henry, in honor of his good friend Henry Keller.

Rachael Sebastian Keller preceeded her husband in death, probably in 1893. Henry Keller passed away in 1898 or '99. Both are buried in Mount Gilead Cemetery."

Lyda White files

"John Grimes' father was Robert Kilgore Grimes. Born in Leesburg, Loudoun County, Virginia, June 30, 1845, he came to Texas by wagon train shortly after the Civil War and settled on a farm along what is now Highway 1709 [adjacent to present-day Westlake]. He was a farmer and a Baptist minister, serving Lonesome Dove, Lone Elm, Mount Gilead and Shiloh churches during his lifetime. His first marriage was to Julia R. Weaver, born December 9, 1864, the daughter of William W. and Sarah T. Read Weaver. Their home was a double log house. Their children were John, Byron (Barney), May and Grace. The mother of these children died October 19, 1895. She was buried in Mount Gilead cemetery.

As a circuit rider, Grimes served a church in the Benbrook community and there met Anna Belle Moore, born February 20, 1860, who had come with her family from Indiana by covered wagon. She became his second wife and the mother of two children, Edwin C., born June 11, 1898, and Mamie Belle, born May 17, 1900."

The Grimes children attended Lone Elm School [which can be located on the Map of Northeast Tarrant County created by E.I. Wiesman, p. 20].

"Grimes died at his farm home April 2, 1921 and was buried in Mount Gilead Cemetery. His wife, Anna Belle, died February 20, 1937 and was buried in Bourland Cemetery.

Alice Keller married John Grimes on March 23, 1910. They planned a quiet wedding to take place an hour before prayer meeting in the home of Pastor Simms who served the Union Church in Keller. John arrived at the bride's home two hours late because a team of wild mules, recently bought, had broken out and had to be caught. In spite of being late, the couple proceeded to Brother Simms' home in one buggy. The groom's sister, May, and another friend, Ellen Elston, came in another buggy. When Brother Simms didn't appear at the church to conduct mid-week services, the congregation went to his front yard to attend the wedding. The ceremony was read while the bride and groom remained seated in their buggy."

After what might be called the first "drive-by wedding," all went to church for prayer meeting.

Lyda White files

List of Postmasters

The Post Office was established as Double Springs on January 11, 1871 and remained until June 16, 1888

William Lopp	January 11, 1871
Thomas Malden	April 28, 1873
William P. Black	September 18, 1873
Oliver J. Wood	June 18, 1884
James A. Ashford	February 12, 1875
Thomas Walden	August 6, 1875
Charles C. Neace	August 28, 1876
John M. Benward	March 7, 1877
William P. Black	December 10, 1877
Sallie B. Williamson	December 27, 1880
Charles C. Mead	March 8, 1882
Charles C. Neace	March 27, 1882
John H. Wallace	December 6, 1886

Information from U.S. Post Office Department

Star Routes

Stagecoach lines carrying passengers and baggage were operating before the American Revolution but during his tenure as Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin implemented the use of stage lines to carry the mail along established routes that came to be known as Post Roads.

In 1845, Star Routes came into being. Such routes were intended to deliver mail to small post offices, especially in rural areas not located on main lines of railroads. In the same year the Star Routes were established, the Postmaster General was directed to award contracts to the lowest bidder for carrying the mail. Those who offered bids were required to give the mail-route number, route terminals and post office stops, the route location in each county and state, distance between each post office, time schedule, names of contractors, the date the contract was awarded and the amount of the bid. (*Information from the National Archives, Washinmgton D.C.)*

Stage Star Route No. 7987 that ran from Alton to Birdville was an extension of the Post Road and a Stage Line that operated from Sherman to Alton. Service began on April 29, 1854. Plascido was the name of one of the stops. It was within a quarter mile of Double Springs.

Although mail was delivered by stage to Plascido, an official post office was not established until 1871 at Double Springs. The first postmaster, appointed in January of that year, was William Lopp, who farmed in the vicinity.

The *Texas Postal History Handbook* gives the following information about post offices in or proximate to Westlake. Alton and Birdville are included because the settlements were the originating and terminating points of Star Route No. 7987.

Alton	Denton County 1848-1859
Birdville	Tarrant 1851-1906
Double Springs	Tarrant 1871-1888 (then to Keller)
Elizabeth Town	Denton 1870-1881 (then to Roanoke)
Mud Spring	Denton 1852-1855
Plascido	Tarrant 1854-1858
Stewartsville	Denton 1847

Compiled by E.I. Wiesman

Information compiled by E.I. Wiesman about the settlements on the routes reveals that Stewartsville, established in 1844, was the site of the Peter's Colony store in southeast Denton County.

"New Alton whose Denton County locations were known first as Pickneyville and then Alton, moved its location to the banks of Hickory Creek in 1850. New Alton became a village with two general stores, a hotel, blacksmith shop, stage-line, cemetery, church and school. The first building constructed was a courthouse of hewed logs covered with two-foot boards held on by weighted poles and a fireplace chimney made of stick-and-mud construction.

"A bridge of 145 feet in length, known as a Pratt through-truss bridge, was constructed across Hickory Creek in 1884. The bridge remains in evidence today.

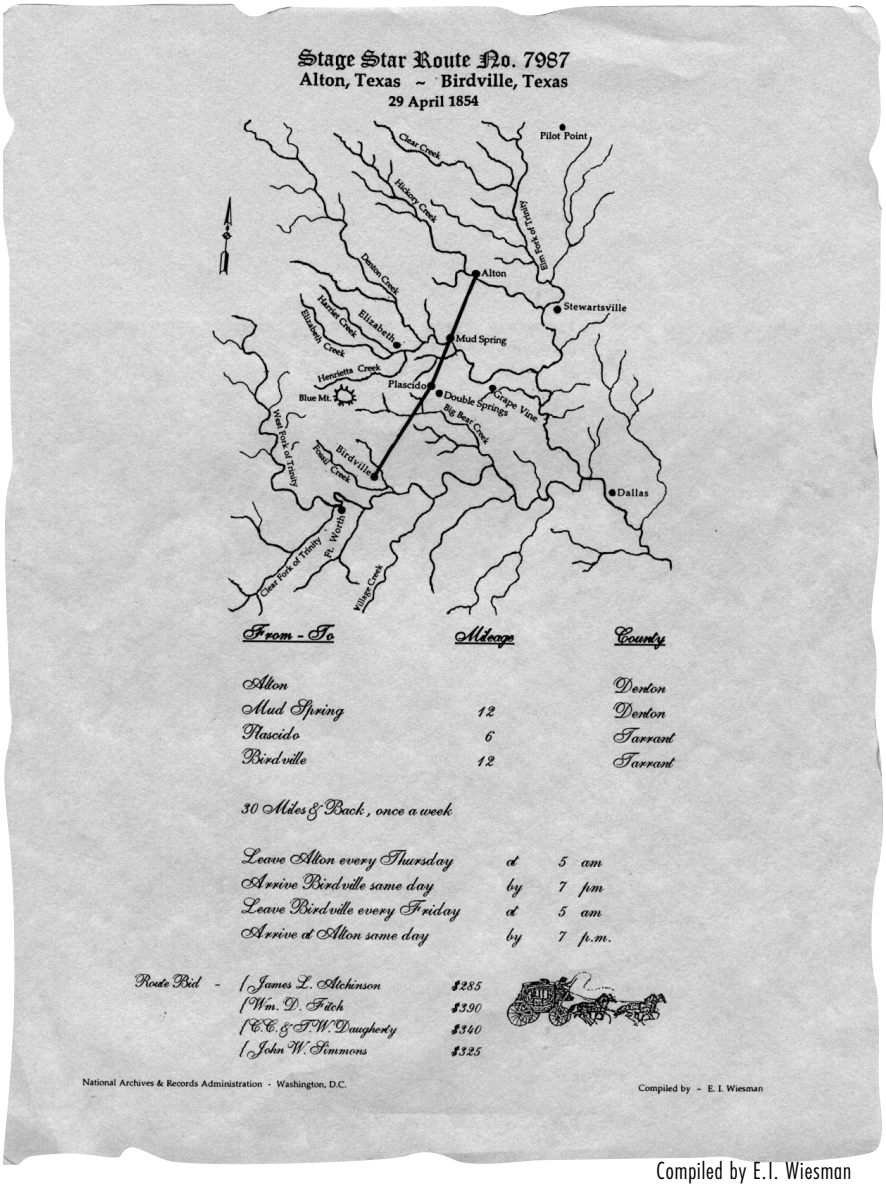
"Elizabeth Town was established around 1850 by members of the Peters Colony. There were two churches, a school, six saloons, a hotel, post office, doctor, blacksmith, wheelwright and wagon master, four general stores, a livery stable and a cemetery. In 1881 the Texas and Pacific railroad bypassed Elizabeth Town, going two miles east through the newly established community of Roanoke. The village was deserted in a short time because most residents moved to Roanoke.

"Double Springs settlers arrived in 1845. The village was founded by a group of related families from Platt County, Missouri. They homesteaded near

the headwaters of Big Bear Creek near the Tarrant and Denton County lines close to two large artesian springs. At one time the village contained some two hundred people and had a post office, cotton gin, blacksmith shop and several stores. The Texas and Pacific railroad also spelled the end of Double Springs. Upon hearing the news that the TPR would push through Athol, a new settlement to the southeast, residents deserted Double Springs, some dragging their houses to the new location. The name, Athol, lasted less than a year and the town took the name of Keller.

"The inhabitants of Bird's Fort, established in 1841, moved further north because of Indian troubles and the community became known as Birdville. The place was a mail distribution point for several communities and was the county seat for a time."

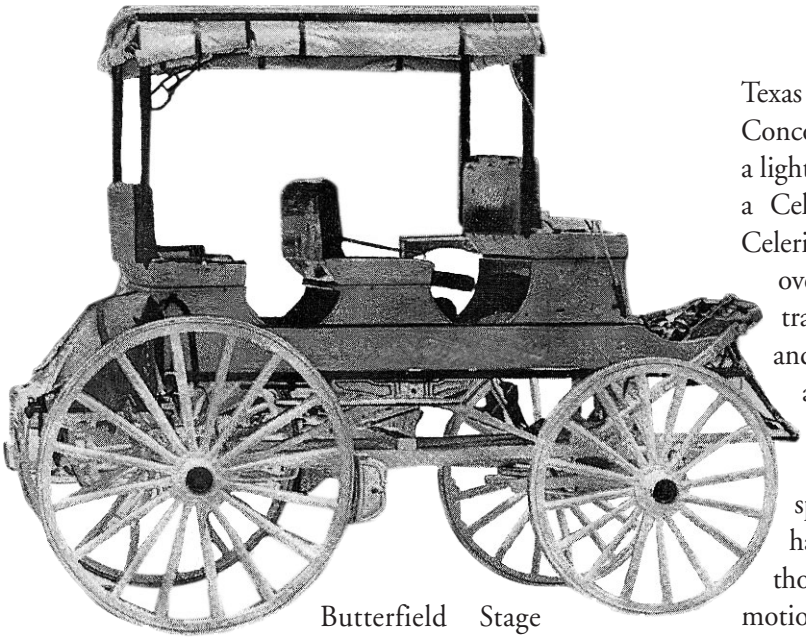
Mr. Wiesman's information is from the Denton County Historical Society and from The Handbook of Texas.



Compiled by E.I. Wiesman

Kinds of Coaches

Types of coaches used on the mail-runs were the Concord Coach and the Celerity Wagon, both developed by John Butterfield for use on the famous



Butterfield Stage Lines. One leg of the line that ran from Missouri to California lay north of Westlake running from Sherman, Gainesville, Denton, Decatur, Bridgeport, Jacksboro and westward. *900 Miles on the Butterfield Trail* by A.C. Greene (UNT Press, 1994) is an excellent resource on the subject.

The Concord held twelve to fifteen passengers including the ones who rode outside. The frame was made of wood and leather and had standard wagon wheels. Baggage, supplies and goods could be carried on top.

It was not the Concord, but rather the Celerity coaches used on most mail runs through the Westlake area. Known also as mud wagons and mail wagons, the Celerities held nine passengers, were used for short hauls, weighed less than the Concord, had canvas roofs and curtains that could be rolled up or down and cost half as much to build. Eva Jolene Boyd, writing in the February, 1990 issue of *Texas Highways* explains:

> "The coaches that rumbled across Texas and the southwest were not the later Concords familiar to today's moviegoers, but a lighter, faster, and less elegant wagon called a Celerity. John Butterfield designed the Celerity with a lower center of gravity for use over roads that were little more than trails. The Celerity boasted a canvas top and a hinged middle seat that could form a bed – the first 'Pullman,' so to speak. Like other stagecoaches of the day, the celerity's chassis did not rest on springs, but swung on three-and-one-half-inch-wide strips of leather called thoroughbraces, resulting in a swaying motion rather than the spine-rattling jolts from conventional carriage springs. Not surprisingly, many passengers complained of 'seasickness'" (10).

Mules, not horses, were often used to pull Butterfield's coaches. The reasons given were that mules were as fast, sure-footed and reliable as horses and that the native tribes that made many of the trips across the plains so harrowing were not interested in mules, only horses.

The Omaha Herald *of 1877 printed some "Hints for the Traveler" for those riding stagecoaches of any kind.*

"Hints For The Traveler"
***Omaha Herald,* 1877**

"The best seat inside a stagecoach is the one next to the driver. You will get less than half the bumps and jars than on any other seat. When any old 'sly Eph,' who traveled thousands of miles on coaches, offers through sympathy to exchange his back or middle seat with you, don't do it.

Never ride in cold weather with tight boots or shoes, nor close-fitting gloves. Bathe your feet before starting in cold water, and wear loose overshoes and gloves two or three sizes too large.

When the driver asks you to get off and walk, do it without grumbling. He will not request it unless absolutely necessary. If a team runs away, sit still and take your chances; if you jump, nine times out of ten you will be hurt.

In very cold weather, abstain entirely from liquor while on the road; a man will freeze twice as quick while under its influence.

Don't growl at food stations; stage companies generally provide the best they can get. Don't keep the stage waiting; many a virtuous man has lost his character by so doing.

Don't smoke a strong pipe inside especially early in the morning. Spit on the leeward side of the coach. If you have anything to take in a bottle, pass it around; a man who drinks by himself in such a case is lost to all human feeling. Provide stimulants before starting; ranch whisky is not always nectar.

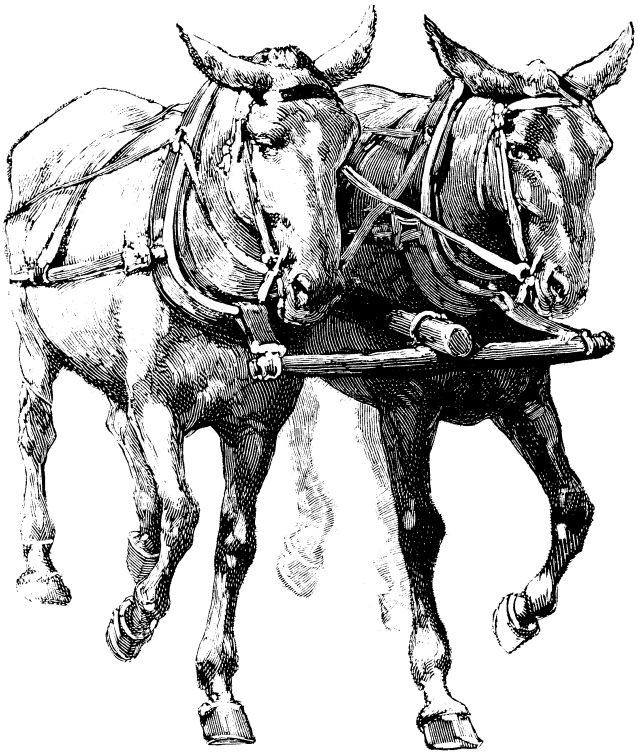
Don't swear, nor loop over on your neighbor when sleeping. Don't ask how far it is to the next station until you get there.

Never attempt to fire a gun or pistol while on the road; it may frighten the team; and the careless handling and cocking of the weapon makes nervous people nervous. Don't discuss politics or religion, nor point out places on the road where horrible murders have been committed.

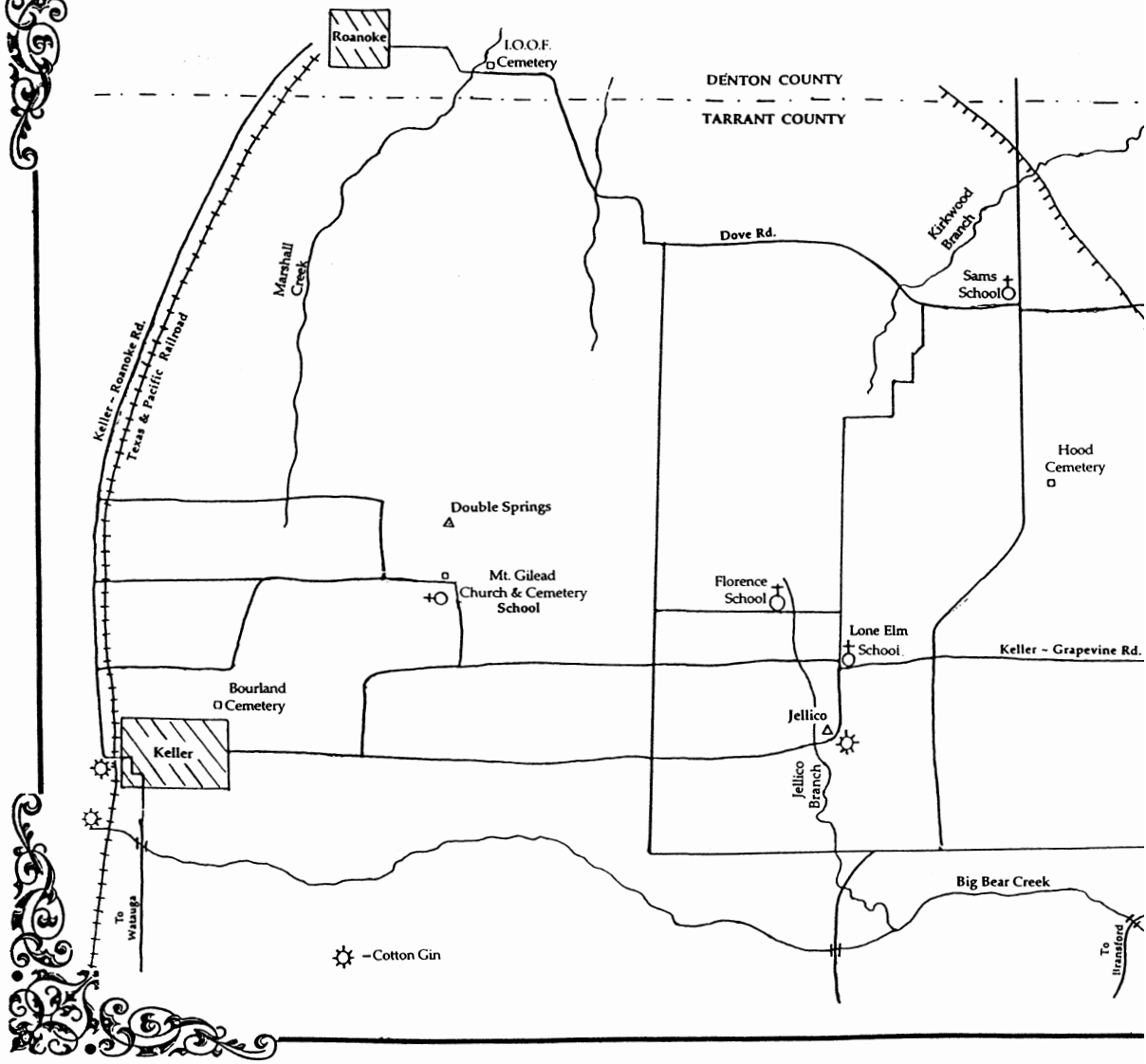
Don't linger too long at the pewter wash basin at the station. Don't grease your hair before starting or dust will stick there in sufficient quantities to make a respectable 'tater' patch. Tie a silk handkerchief around your neck to keep out dust and prevent sunburns. A little glycerin is good in case of chapped hands.

Don't imagine for a moment you are going on a picnic; expect annoyance, discomfort and some hardships. If you are disappointed, thank heaven."

Dear reader, notice there is no advice for female passengers!



Northeast Tar
1846 ~



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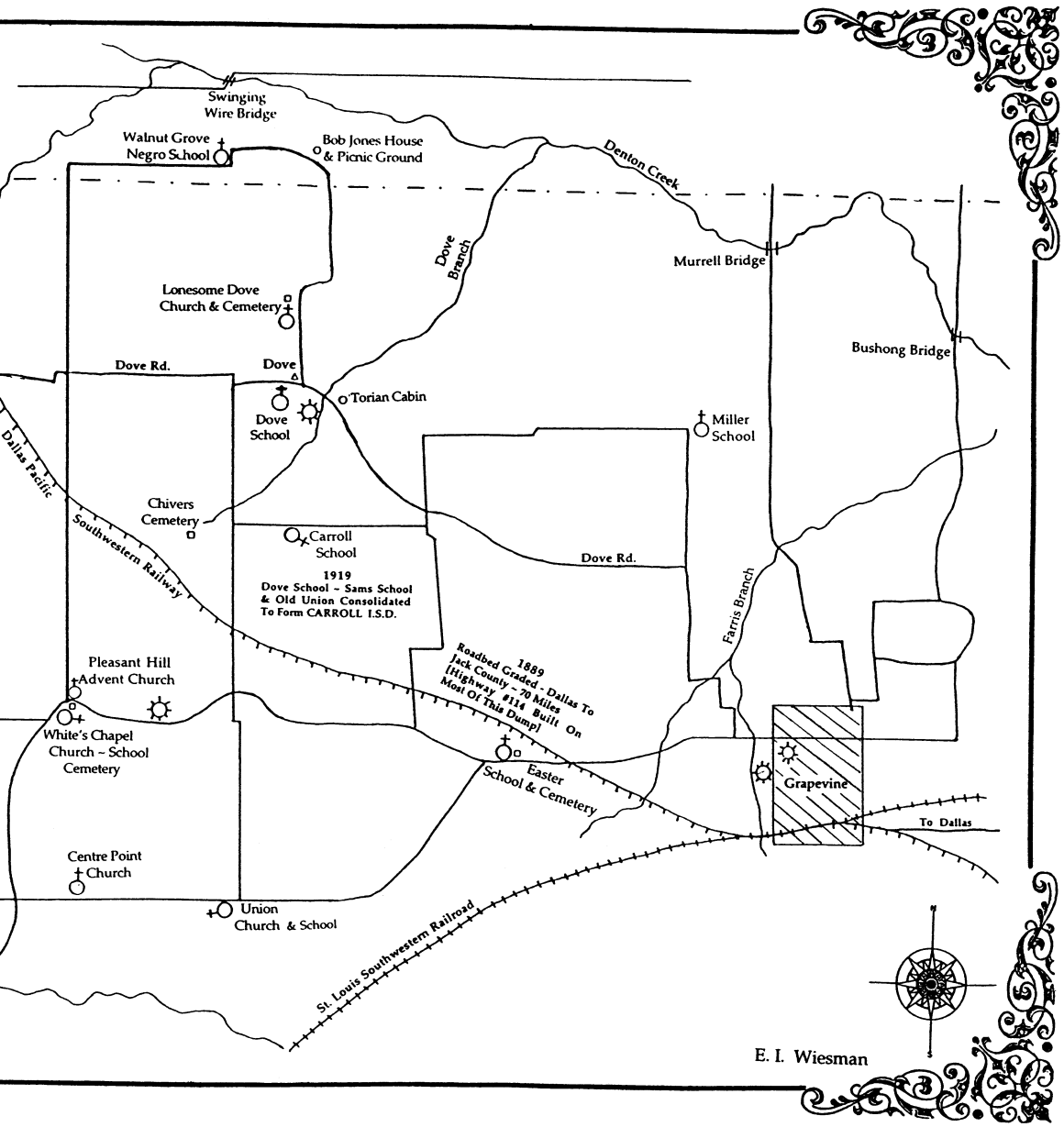


The Cross Timbers
timbered islands amid lakes of grass awash in wildflowers

By Joyce Gibson Roach

Westlake lies in the heart of a geographical region known as the Cross Timbers. As a region it has been, until recently, of little importance in the larger scheme of economics and development in the state. In the perspective of Texans and tourists alike, the Hill Country has always been the place. It conjures images of crystal rivers fed from designer spring waters, oak trees dipped in Spanish moss and prairies awash in bluebonnets. Wildlife in all its forms and a rich history embroiders the tapestry. Names of places and people alone – the Alamo, Sam Houston – speak volumes. Other geographical regions mark the coast, the mountains and basins, the piney woods, the prairies and plains, the Trans-Pecos region, but all seem tied to the historical umbilical cord of the Hill Country.

The name Cross Timbers, called by local naturalists the Little Hill Country, is obscure and not usually counted as one of the major regional divisions of the state on maps. Yet, it is there on some, looking like icing running down the sides of a cake, the eastern and western designations drizzling down from the Red River. The Cross Timbers appears as vertical, irregular lines. Little is offered in books about the origins of the Cross Timbers beyond the larger picture when the earth coughed up volcanoes, shifted plates, spewed floods, squirmed and exploded seams, and experienced other cataclysmic occurrences that accounted for its prehistoric appearance.

We know that the area was once covered in water because marine fossils testify to such conditions. Then, the region began to dry up and emerge from the seas, eventually leaving behind features recognizable today. Archaeological finds indicate that man used the area for at least some twelve thousand years. Fossilized bones unearthed during the construction of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport prove that *plesiosaur* roamed the locale seventy million years ago (Gage, *Scenes from the Past*).

The Cross Timbers, however, is of recent development in the earth's time scheme. The east and west designations are described in the Texas Almanac (1989), as "hanging over the top of the Grand Prairie and dropping down on each side like a curtain swag, the top of which begins at the Red River border of North Central Texas." The fact is that the Cross Timbers leaps the Red and substantial parts lie in Oklahoma and Kansas, but then the information didn't come from their almanacs and Texas has always been protective about its own borders and its own history.

The western section includes portions of Clay, Montague, Jack, Young, Wise, Parker, Hood, Palo Pinto, Stephens, Shackelford, Callahan, Throckmorton, Erath, Eastland, Comanche, Brown, and Hamilton Counties to the Colorado River where the Timbers meets the Edwards Plateau. The Brazos River, called by the Spanish *Los Brazos de Dios*, translating into The Arms of God, is the waterway of the region. The eastern portion includes Cooke, Grayson, Denton, Dallas, Tarrant, Johnson, Hill, and McLennan counties and embraces the Trinity River as its own.

A large part of the Eastern Cross Timbers impacts both Dallas and Fort Worth, and the mindsets of the cosmopolitan world and country ways, at least in times past. Amon G. Carter, whose name is identified with the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and the development of the city, is credited with describing the two places by saying that "Dallas is where the east peters out and Fort Worth is where the west begins." The citizens of one city often had little use for the citizens and values of the other. Great arguments and frictions were there between the two almost from the beginnings of their existence. Residents of Westlake and surrounding towns often leaned to one city or the other and tended to give their allegiance to one place or the other – and still do.

Boyce House, one of the state's humorists and writers, explained the differences of long ago between Dallas and Fort Worth in "Cities."

Dallas,
A pompous-girthed merchant
Who after a day of bartering among his bales,
Sits down to talk of culture.
. . .
Fort Worth,
A bronzed cowboy
With spurs clanking,
A bandanna knotted at his throat;
Quick to laugh, or shoot, or take a drink;
A ring-tailed tooter from Bitter Creek –
At his saddle-horn a lariat
With which he tries to lasso the stars.
(Signature of the Sun, 139*)*

As a geographical region, the Eastern Cross Timbers is an area lying between and sometimes mingling in what is known as the Grand Prairie and the Blackland Prairie, but all three regions are where the Piney Woods of East Texas eventually give up to the rolling, grassy lands marking the southeastern edge of the mythic Great Plains, the same ones of legend, story, and song – a place noticeable because of the absence of trees.

It is little wonder that the Eastern Cross Timbers region, especially the western edge where small settlements would sprout like seeds broadcast in the wind, looked ideal for those who had already heard the gossip about the hardships of the Plains and did not want to venture there either alone or in groups. A family could make a home in the Cross Timbers where nature seemed beneficent, a place of springs, woods, game, berries, nuts, and other wild vegetation edible for man and beast – a place much like other wooded regions of the world.

Yet, interspersed with the familiar woods was open prairie land ideal for ranching or planting crops once a plow was developed that would cut through grasses so thick that even animals had difficulty traversing them. By the later 1880s, settlers were prepared to deal with both grasslands and timbers due to better plows and barbed wire. Large towns and cities such as Dallas and Fort Worth would develop nearby like fortresses with their gates open, inviting the inhabitants of the settlements and villages of our area to come, buy, sell, and barter, to partake of culture, education, and ease.

Benjamin Carroll Tharp, writing a nonscientific description of the natural regions of Texas in 1939, said that the Eastern Cross Timbers had "motes of timber standing as islands in the prairies … with embayments of prairie lying both between peninsular timber strips and as 'lakes' well within the timbered region …" (*Vegetation of Texas,* 35).

Such places are generally called oak savannas, a name that refers to wooded areas broken by stretches of grasslands. It may have been that the region was once grasslands only and that vegetation and trees increased when the climate became warmer and drier by Late Prehistoric time after 1500, Before Present (Prikryl, *Lower Elm Fork Prehistory*, 15). Because of natural fires and burning by natives to flush game or to clear open areas, the region began to change. Because settlers used similar burning techniques and

overgrazed the land, the oak savanna is now beginning to be sometimes classified as an oak woodland (19). Because of developers and builders who raze the landscape, the place may soon be classified as simply, gone. It is to Westlake's credit that the destructive techniques used by some city planners and developers in the region are not tolerated in the township. In fact, conservation of the natural region is encouraged and developing and building grows out of and in harmony with the natural environment, making Westlake a model for others to emulate.

Although you may think of the climate as hot and dry here, it is scientifically identified as subtropical and humid with mild winters and hot summers, usually, although both seasons may defy the description, and often do. Floods, droughts, and temperatures below freezing and above one hundred occur as often as not.

The soil is made up of predominantly fine textured sandy loam, and colored mostly red-brown with some gray. Below the loam is often a subsoil of clay, yellow or red in color. The same sandy loam and clay subsoil are favorable for the growth of oak trees because they absorb the moisture in rainy times and hold and protect against surface evaporation in dry spells and drought (Tharp, 31).

The often rough, rising and falling landscape that gives the area its hilly topography is the result of the weather resistance of outcroppings of sandstone. Along the western edges of our area are knobs, another name for hills. At the top of such hills are boulders of sandstone and ironstone (Pickryl, 9). The effect of icing sliding off a cake as a description of the uneven boundaries occurs because of sandy soils carried by streams to the clay-like edges of the Blackland Prairie.

Some of the stone in the Cross Timbers was usable for native cultures of both the prehistoric and historic periods. Known as Uvalde gravels, found in random patches and small pocket-deposits, the raw material contained quartzite, identified as Ogallala quartzite that had been carried down by rivers through the centuries from the Colorado Rockies. Mixed in were some silica-rich rocks such as chert, another name for flint. Chipped-stone items such as spear and other points, jagged edged knives, and scraping tools, all of which were occasionally made of ironstone, were prevalent. Handheld stones for digging, pounding, scraping, and grinding made use of quartzite, chert, and, sometimes, sandstone (Prikryl, 14). Artifacts such as weights on atlatls (throwing sticks), gorgets (collar-like ornaments), and pendants were made of stone and likely used or worn as ceremonial decorations of some kind (Banks, *Grapevine History*, 12).

A variety of oaks including post oak, blackjack oak, burr and red oaks abound in the top layer of vegetation. Other trees such as pecan, a variety of elms, bearing mulberries, honey locust, wild plum, black walnut, ash, black willow, and the Osage orange, or bois d'arc, from which Indians made bows and settlers shaped fences, are also common. Junipers, also called Mountain Cedar, are late-comers. Some naturalists say Mesquite did not enter the regions until the time of cattle drives when herds left seeds from their droppings along the trail.

Undergrowth is made up of saplings of a variety of trees, briars, and vines such as grape, berry, honeysuckle, and trumpet. This understory produces, among other edibles, mustang grapes, plums, pecans, walnuts, and acorns. Acorns, too bitter for human consumption, were eaten by animals and birds such as deer, squirrel, wild turkey and quail, which were part of the human food chain (Prikryl, 12).

In addition to the animals and birds already named which fed on acorns, studies show that rabbits, turtles, and mussels were also food sources for early inhabitants. While bison did not penetrate into the Cross Timbers, they were part of the bordering environment of the prairies as were antelope, both hunted by early peoples. On the testimony of old-timers, there are still buffalo wallows near Blue Mound southwest of Westlake. These were places where the great herds bedded down, stamped and pawed the earth

and tore up the ground in fighting and mating (Lyda White files). Some suppose that the shaggy coats of buffalo may also have been major seed carriers and account for the propagation of trees such as mesquite, now considered a nuisance.

Black bear, beaver, and wolf once found the Cross Timbers agreeable until they were hunted to extinction or their habitat destroyed. Coyote have always managed to adapt and still find some space left, as do armadillo, opossum, jack and cottontail rabbit, raccoon and skunk. Texas Parks and Wildlife reports that mammals include over fifty species.

Seventy-five kinds of reptiles (including the banded coral, rattlesnake, and copperhead of the poisonous variety) and amphibians are present. Not many years ago the horned lizard, known as the horny toad by children of another generation, was plentiful. Now, because of the use of pesticides and destruction of habitat through land development, the spiny creatures are rarely seen locally although they are still plentiful in West Texas.

At least fifty-five species of fish are found in rivers, lakes, or creeks such as Marshall, Bear and Denton. Some 320 species of birds plus forty-three more kinds of migratory fowl find sanctuary with us (*Texas Almanac*).

Almost every cultural gathering place anywhere in the world where villages, settlements, and communities spring up is associated with a river in one way or another. In the case of the Eastern Cross Timbers, the river is the Trinity, named by Spanish explorers in honor of the Holy Trinity of their Catholic faith, and because three major streams contribute to the river.

The Trinity is classified as a second-class river, a younger waterway that forms at a later time than a first-class river. Both the Brazos and the Red are first-class rivers, and it is between these two that the Trinity formed. Three streams, Elm Fork, West Fork, and East Fork, converge and eventually empty into the Gulf of Mexico at Galveston. Little Bear Creek joins Big Bear Creek in Tarrant County just before crossing into Dallas County. The Bear Creek system, beginning just west of Keller, empties into the West Fork of the Trinity in Dallas County (Prikryl, 70).

Springs were the principal water sources until the water tables dropped in recent times. Wells were often drilled with rigs that pounded their way into the ground rather than using bits that spiraled downward. Windmills became part of the landscape.

Many plants grew wild in the open spaces and edges of the prairie. A partial list includes wild onions, *psoralea* (prairie turnips), poke and other "greens" all of which were edible. A dazzling variety of wildflowers, among them the Drummond Phlox, natural to this region, carpeted the land.

Count de Pourtal`es, who accompanied Washington Irving on his first venture into the western United States, described the upper Eastern Cross Timbers along the Arkansas River. In his evocative words, the region becomes more than meets and bounds, topography, flora or fauna. He wrote:

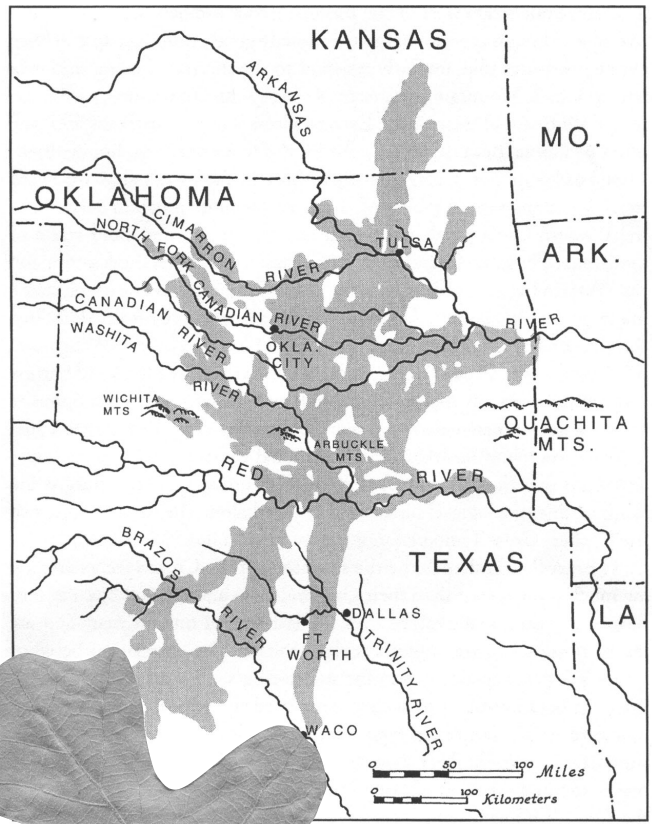
> We spent the morning in one of the most beautiful stretches of forest that I have ever seen. There were magnificent, sparsely scattered trees and twenty varieties of climbing plants, some bright green and others delicately shaped and turned red by the frost. The entire wood seemed to burst with the many colors of autumn. The ground was covered with thick waves of horse-bean plants, forming an impenetrable, tangled carpet lifted up but not pierced by the underbrush. . . . Beyond [the] fertile riverbank stretched rocky hills, furrowed by almost-dry . . . torrents and covered with yellowed grass in which, here and there, grew stunted oaks. From the top of the rocks could be seen the meandering turns of the Arkansas, the long sinuous valley, … rocks and woods which stretched to infinity, and the yellowish line of the eternal and majestic prairies. (*On the Western Tour with Washington Irving: The Journal and Letters of Count de Pourtalès,*

University of Oklahoma Press, 1968; quoted in *The Cast Iron Forest*).

The Count might have praised, just as exactly, our own Trinity River and environs – if we could have seen it in 1832.

What's in a name?

The reason for the name, Cross Timbers, is obscure and rests as much on folklore as fact. One explanation is that the region was a place where Westering folk had to cross through large belts of oaks that were difficult to traverse.



From *The Cast Iron Forest: A Natural and Cultural History of the North American Cross Timbers* by Richard V. Francaviglia, Copyright © 2000. Courtesy of the author and the University of Texas Press. Map by author, p.17

In 1716, Capitan Don Domingo Ramón undertook an expedition for the purpose of establishing missions in Texas. He traveled into the Cross Timbers, but at exactly what place is unknown. Calling it the *Monte Grande*, Big Woods, Ramon wrote:

> "This day I traveled through a dense wooded region of oaks. The forest was so impenetrable that we could not pass through on horseback without cutting down some trees with axes and knives. We lost two knives. We advanced seven leagues with great difficulty, arriving in the afternoon in an open spot, that God had placed there for us to rest after such a painful journey" (Fox, *Traces of Texas History,* 20).

Washington Irving wrote in *A Tour on the Prairies*, 1832:

> "I shall not easily forget the mortal toil, and the vexations of flesh and spirit, that we underwent occasionally, in our wanderings through the Cross Timber. It was like struggling through forests of cast iron" (Francanviglia, *The Cast Iron Forest*, 57).

William Kennedy, writing in *Texas: The Rise, Progress, and Prospects of the Republic of Texas, 1841* observed that "The Cross Timber of Northern Texas, which may be deemed one of the natural curiosities of the country, forms a remarkable feature in its topography" (7).

Both Irving and Kennedy used the singular "Cross Timber" pointing to the observation by some that the vegetation appeared to grow in a single, vertical line.

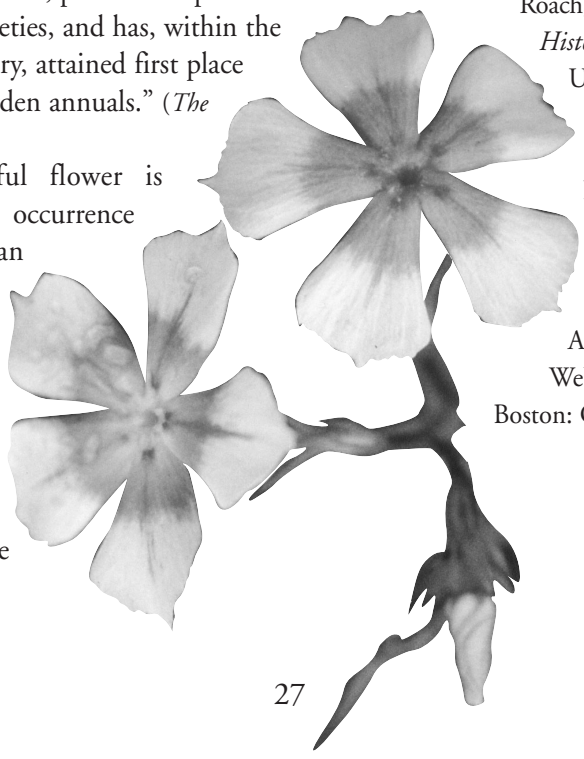
Some added an element of the religious to the name. Post oaks were sometimes referred to as Cross Oaks because of the shape of the leaves. Whether scientific, practical or folklore, the Cross Timbers served as a line of demarcation, a psychological boundary separating the "Savages" from "Us."

The Drummond Phlox

Every Texas child knows that the state flower is the Bluebonnet and can readily identify it by shape and color. Yet, the Bluebonnet is not native to this part of the state. Another flower, the Drummond Phlox, is.

Drummond was a botanist from Scotland who discovered the flower. Benjamin Carroll Tharp wrote:

> "Drummond's Phlox, rated the most loved of all garden annuals and cultivated in every civilized country on earth, is native of the [Cross Timbers and Central Texas] region and not known to be native elsewhere, at least not with the beautiful shade of deep red which characterized the plant upon which the original description and the colored illustration accompanying it were based some hundred years ago. Seeds sent to England by Drummond were planted, the species figured and described, and the plant widely introduced into gardens by the Botanical Garden at Edinburgh. It thrived in cultivation, grew in favor, produced a prodigious number of varieties, and has, within the short span of a century, attained first place among cultivated garden annuals." (*The Vegetation of Texa*s, 36)
>
> "This beautiful flower is more widespread in occurrence over the state than even the celebrated Bluebonnet. Groups of flower lovers long advanced it as a rival of the Bluebonnet for the honor of being officially designated the State Flower." (xiv)



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A chimney at the corner of Pearson Lane and Aspen Lane stands sentinel on the past

In the Autumn of 2001, E. I. Wiesman, a local historian whose maps and research information appear in this issue, asked Phillip White to ride around with him in Westlake to identify the chimney at the corner of Pearson Lane and Aspen on property owned by Terry Bradshaw.

White, who will be ninety years old this year, lives adjacent to his ancestral homestead on Cheek Road just off Davis Boulevard. The land, given as a grant to his great-grandfather, Thomas Jefferson Thompson, for his service under Sam Houston during the Texas Revolution, remains in the family.

Still possessed of a keen mind and memory of places and people of the area when there were no city limits or boundaries, White recalled that the chimney marks the homestead of Buck King. King was a tall bachelor-farmer who raised farm animals and fowl, and grew cotton, corn and peanuts south and east of the house. The road that ran north to join Dove Road was known as Buck King Road. Pearson Lane didn't exist at the time. The house of clapboard siding was probably a three-room structure facing south.

Buck's brother, who was smaller in stature, was a graduate of Texas A&M and taught at Florence School for a year in 1925. Phillip White, as the saying was, "went to school to him."

He also remembers that the land forms a kind of divide; run-off on the north feeds into the Denton Creek system to the east and on the south feeds into the Bear Creek system to the west.

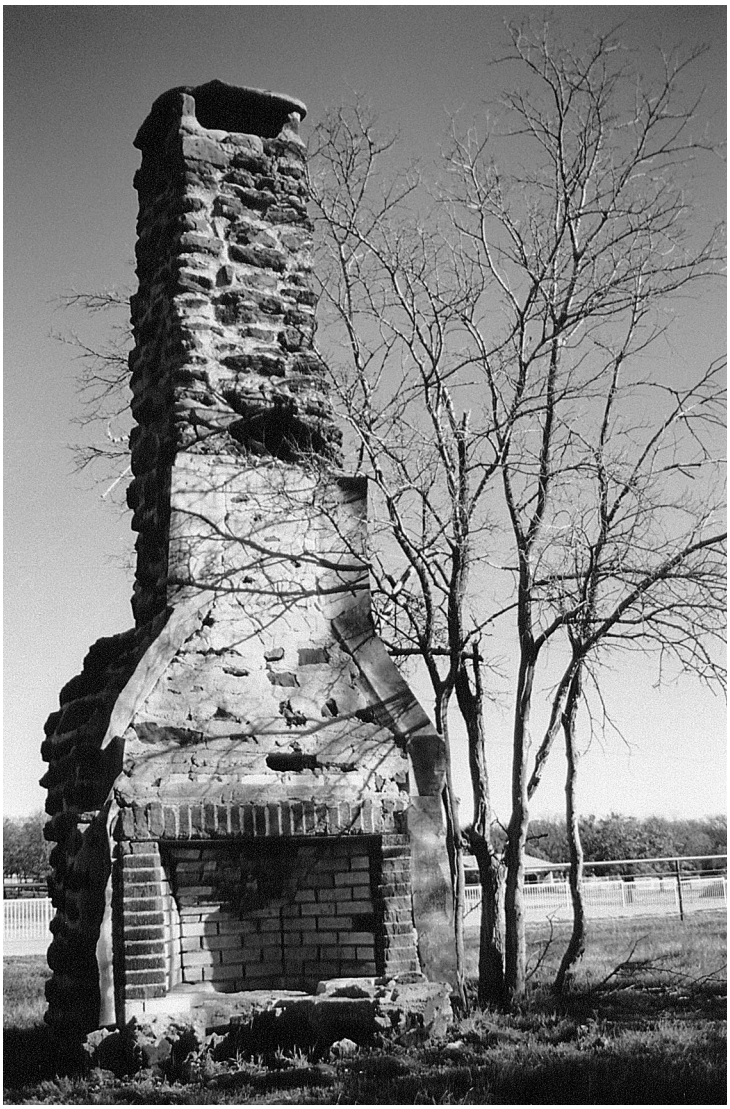


Photo by Joyce Gibson Roach

Then & NOW
Westlake's First Arbor Days

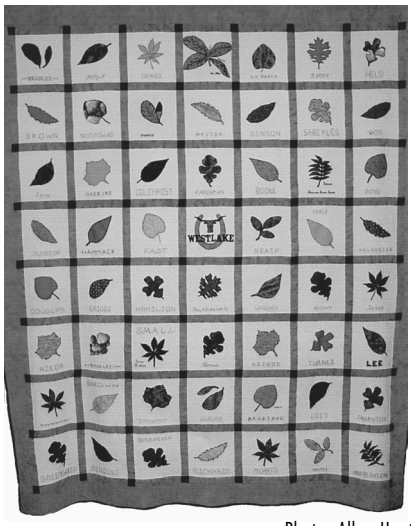
by Debra & Allen Heath invited contributors

The trees, hillsides, country roads and good neighbors are what brought all of us to Westlake. We chose to live here and have worked side by side to stay united. We are proud to be Westlake citizens. We, like the trees in Westlake, are a symbol of strength, standing tall, weathering many challenges, and we also, like the trees, are not living secluded lives from our surroundings. Westlake is growing and changing. Preserving, yet sharing the country feeling that we have come to enjoy and expect, is a priority.

Westlake's Board of Aldermen approved the resolution creating the Westlake Tree City USA Advisory Committee on the 28th day of February, 2000. The charter committee members included Debra Heath, Stephen Thornton, Betty Redding, Colleen Greenwood, Melanie Vanlandingham, and Candice Thornton as the youth member. The resolution outlined the duties and responsibilities for the committee as specified by the Tree City USA Standards: (1) A Tree Board, (2) Community Tree Ordinance, (3) Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at least $2 per capita, and (4) Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation.

We asked the question, "What would help the citizens identify native trees in our community and provide a means for combining their knowledge into a community effort?" The answer was to draw upon an old-fashioned occasion of yesteryear known as quilting parties and to provide everything needed so each Westlake family could contribute a hand-embroidered leaf-square to make a Heritage Quilt for the town. Each family was given a quilt packet including: an instruction booklet, muslin, green fabric, a leaf pattern, embroidery thread, a pre-threaded needle, and an embroidery hoop.

Neighbors helped neighbors as men and women gathered to refresh embroidery skills and help those who were unable to complete their own square. Fifty-four of the eighty-five Westlake families contributed a quilt square. The Heritage Quilt would be prominently displayed at the upcoming Arbor Day Celebration.



Photo, Allen Heath

Westlake's Arbor Day arrived on October 14, 2000. Special guests included the Rotary Club from Zapopan, Mexico. Homemade food was shared as people sat together for an old fashioned neighborhood potluck while vocalists sang and children participated in educational tree identification activities.

One Arbor Day activity included walking a wide, privately owned nature trail. With specially made booklets and identification guides (and the expert knowledge from the forester, the landscape architect, and property owners Steve and Paula Thornton) everyone could experience the trail and learn of the natural

diversity. It was easy to see how difficult travel through the Cross Timbers could have been before the advent of trails and the later clearing of land for ranches and modern development.

As the traditional part of the Arbor Day ceremony, Mayor Scott Bradley, proclaimed October 14, 2000, as our Arbor Day. Jan Davis, Texas Forest Service's Regional Urban Forester, gave the background of Arbor Day and spoke regarding the care of post oaks. Westlake's landscape architect, Melanie Vanlandingham of Newman Jackson Bieberstien, explained the Tree Ordinance.

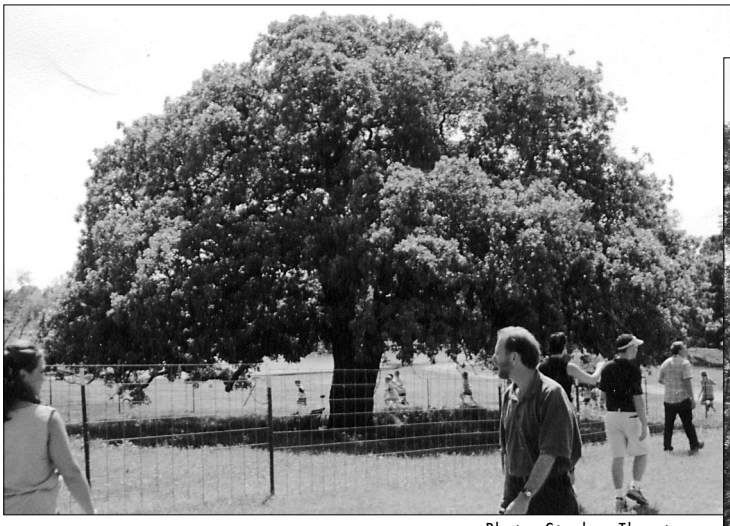
The anticipated tree planting time came. Preschoolers from The School at Stage Coach Stop sang "There's a tree in the hole . . . " while the town's officials used gold painted spades to plant the chinquapin oak tree.

Westlake's largest tree contest was a highlight of the day's events. At 130 1/2" in girth, Westlake's largest tree was located on the Thornton property. It is known as the Sunset Tree, so called because of the beautiful sunsets that appeared to frame the tree. Sadly, the Sunset Tree was damaged beyond saving by a violent storm in the spring of 2001. The Parchman Tree, at 119 1/2", was named reserve champion and the infamous Hanging Tree, at 104 3/4" in girth, was awarded third place. The Hanging Tree, located in the Oddfellows Cemetery, is reputed to be the site of the last, probably illegal public hanging in Denton County. The victim, believed to have been a horse thief, is buried near the tree.

The festive atmosphere continued for months afterwards as the National Arbor Day Foundation recognized the Town of Westlake with the Arbor Day Celebration Award. Town representatives, Debra Heath and Stephen Thornton, went to Nebraska City, Nebraska, to receive this national award on April 28, 2001.

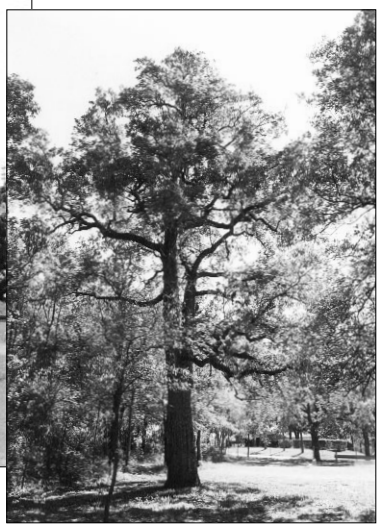
The Arbor Day 2001 Celebration was held in the GlynWyck Farms subdivision where Westlake enjoyed a public park for the first time in its history. Excitement rose as the announcement was made that the newly constructed GlynWyck Farms received one of The Texas Urban Forestry Awards in the category of Residential Development Project. The award cited such activities as "successful landscaping efforts; being proactive in the prevention of Hypoxylon Canker disease in oak trees; supporting and installing public trails within the flood plain even through gated communities; preserving trees and planting additional trees in the town park; manipulating plans to work around existing trees and roadways; and financial commitment to the plans." Gary Whitaker, in costume as the 19th century father of Arbor Day – J. Sterling Morton – related the importance of Arbor Day and tree preservation.

Just as the early settlers cleared land for ranches and crops, the new settlers of the 21st century are claiming more and more of the Cross Timbers for businesses and homes. Historical preservation must also preserve nature, the trees, and the pathways that take us back to our roots as well as forward to our future.



Photo, Stephen Thornton

Debra Heath, Chairperson of Westlake's Tree City USA Advisory Committee, led the town to receive its first national award: The Arbor Day Celebration Award.



Photo, Joyce Roach

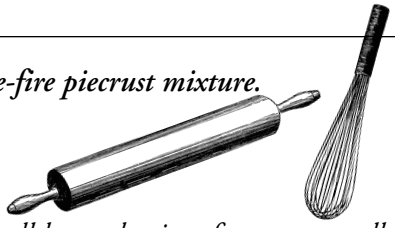
In search of yesterday. Old times, old ways, gone but not forgotten.

In the time-scheme of things, Westlake was created an instant ago. Yet, the place itself is old, as old as the geographical characteristics of the Cross Timbers region, as old as the native tribes who used the area or the first explorers and frontier settlers who came bringing with them their cultural baggage – their folklore and folkways – from other towns, regions and countries. In this, the first issue of The PathFinder, we bring you news of all our yesterdays, yours and mine, and say "welcome home" to a place familiar to the heart even if you've never been there.

Ruby Palmer married Fred Held on June 27, 1959 in Dallas, Texas. The couple moved in 1983 to the Westlake area to unincorporated property on Spring Drive. Then in 1987, they bought a house on Aspen Lane in Westlake. Fred, a fourth generation hardware man who became CEO and president of Elliot's Hardware in Dallas opened a store in Grapevine in 1991 and then retired six months later. Ruby is a premiere volunteer whose works are known throughout Westlake. They have two children and one grandchild.

Shortly before Ruby's wedding day, friends gave her a shower typical of the times. The gifts were recipes and helpful hints for the bride. Such precious gifts didn't cost the givers any money, just time – always a valuable commodity in any age. Ruby saved the memories of that day and shares them, knowing how much everyone needs household tips and recipes today.

Jennie Bell Ratcliff gave her sure-fire piecrust mixture.



2 1/2 cups flour 1 tsp.salt
3/4 cup shortening 1/2 cup water
Cut shortening into flour until small lump the size of a pea or smaller.
Add water a few drops at time until "doe" forms a ball.
Divide into two parts. Makes two single crust or one double crust pie
Cook at 450 degrees until brown

HELPFUL HINTS
from Ruby

To remove rust stains in fabric, rub with lemon juice and apply table salt and put in sun for a while.

Pinch of soda in tea keeps it from getting milky looking.

Baking powder in creamed potatoes makes them fluffy.

Sprinkle clothes with warm water [***before ironing***].

Fill milk cartons with water, freeze and use to keep food cold when packing for a trip or picnic; much nicer than drippy ice.

Be careful of the plastic bags that come with dry-cleaning because they might smother the children.

Peel an onion with a match in your mouth. You will not cry.

Don't let egg harden on the plate or you'll never get it off.

Put plenty of water on rice or beans.

Clean stainless steel with ammonia because ***it's not stainless***.

Soda will clean stain from cups.

If you are detained and can't get your ironing done, put it in the refrigerator and ***forget it***.

A little soda wrapped in a cloth bag and placed in your flour canister will keep the weevils out.

Rice in salt shaker will keep the salt dry.

Buy your cleaning supplies from Held's Hardware Store and get your husband to demonstrate their uses at least once a week.

Westlake Historical Preservation Board

Left to Right: Kelly Bradley, Stephen Thornton, David Brown, Steve Stamos, Mary Midgette, Ruby Held, Tom Allen, Wanda Haskins. Not pictured: Allen Heath

Photo courtesy of Fidelity Investments

Acknowledgements:

Many people including the Westlake Historical Preservation Board enthusiastically helped in the research, writing and collecting of photographs, some of them family treasures.

They are: Steve Stamos, chairman; Tom Allen, Kelly Bradley, David Brown, Wanda Haskins, Allen Heath, Ruby Held and Stephen Thornton.

Ginger Crosswy, Town Secretary, and Mary Midgette, Assistant to the Town Manager, spent hours answering questions, following leads and searching for information in files.

E.I. Wiesman generously allowed the use of information and research, much of which has taken him years to collect and produce. He is the most qualified local historian in the area. Jack, as he is called, is a retired pilot with Continental. He has lived in Southlake since 1962. He and wife, Glenda, have three daughters and five grandchildren. His homestead located on Highway 1709 is the site of an old road from Jellico to Bransford, now Colleyville. Wagon ruts are still visible and the acreage contains a rich variety of oaks, other trees and vegetation representative of the Cross Timbers.

Richard Francaviglia is Professor of History and Director of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography at the University of Texas at Arlington. He generously allowed the use of both drawings and maps from his book, *The Cast Iron Forest: A Natural and Cultural History of the North American Cross Timbers.* University of Texas Press, 1998.