

# MUSEUM MUSINGS

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Denton County Historical Museum, Inc., is to collect, preserve, and display artifacts including documents, photographs, and other records relative to the history of Denton county and its people for public education through exhibits, research facilities, and special events.

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The DCHM, Inc., is a member of American Association of Museums, Texas Association of Museums, Greater Denton Arts Council, and KERA Partners

## JOHN B. DENTON DAYS

The Denton County Historical Museum, Inc., will join in celebrating John B. Denton Days July 28-30. The event commemorates the 200th birthday of the pioneer for whom Denton County is named.

Denton County was settled primarily by people who came for land, something in which the Republic of Texas was rich. Many of the settlers came as part of the Peters Colony, land granted to W. S. Peters of Kentucky and his associates.

It is hard to imagine how different this county looked to those settlers who stepped onto rich Blackland Prairie and wooded Cross Timbers. As Holly Hervey wrote in **Historic Denton County**, "They were not disappointed when they arrived. Grasses that grew knee high waved like ripples on lakes. They all had to walk in front of the wagons to cut or break down the grasses to get the wagons through. Many varieties of fruits grew in the thickets and trees.



*A typical home from the early days of Denton County*

Grapes, persimmons, and red and yellow plums grew in thickets as large as three or four acres. Herds of buffalo roamed the area. Deer and rabbits were plentiful for meat. Pecans, hickory nuts, walnuts, and acorns were in great supply. Many of the trees were filled with honey deposited by the bees that swarmed the area."

The settlers came for a new life, many of them believing as John Henry Ware did that "money grew there on bushes." Mr. Ware seems to have been doubly disappointed in Texas, because he soon left, blaming the Texas climate: "i suffered more with cold thare than I did in twelve

miles of Nebraski." Most newcomers, however, settled into a life of farming, raising cattle, or living in one of the several small towns, working as blacksmiths—there were 20 of them in 180, millers, shoe and saddle makers, wagon makers, 47 masons, brick makers, cabinet makers, and all the other professions needed to make the community function.

The Museum will be open on July 28 and 29, 10 a.m.– 5 p.m. for research, and with displays of early pioneers (see p. 2 for details). We will also have mountain dulcimer music from our increasingly well-known Denton Dulci-Doodlers.

## WHAT'S GOING ON AT DCHM, INC.

*DCHM's own  
Collections Coordinator  
Holly Hervey will be  
lecturing on The Denton  
Collection, on Thursday,  
July 27, at 7 p.m. at the  
Emily Fowler Library*

*The Denton Dulci-  
Doodlers will play at 6  
p.m. Thursday at the  
library, and at the  
Museum at 2 p. m. on  
Saturday*



*Making music . .  
and listening to music*



### Celebrating

#### John B. Denton Days

The Museum will be open on Friday and Saturday, July 28-29 in conjunction with the Denton Days events. The Denton Surname Records will be open for research. We will have exhibits on early pioneers of Denton County and their contributions. We will have an exhibit called *That's Progress*,

with photos and artifacts spotlighting advancements in living. The Denton Dulci-Doodlers, who are becoming increasingly well-known from their performances in the region, will be performing on Saturday afternoon.

#### Coming Exhibits

The Museum has two interesting exhibits planned for late summer and early fall. August

will feature "Who Was That Named For?", revealing the people behind the names of Denton streets, parks, buildings, schools, neighborhoods, etc. In September, we will be featuring "They Made a Name for Themselves," honoring Denton natives who have made a name for themselves. Both exhibits will be on view Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a. m.-5 p.m.

## FINDING LOCAL RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH: A VISIT TO THE JUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Researchers sometimes overlook small sources of valuable materials, such as local libraries. We found a small treasury of information concerning Justin at the Justin Public Library, 5th & Pafford, in Justin. Jayne Hudson, the librarian, cares for several small collections of material

relative to Justin, including **The Justin Story**, by Grace Parr; with many illustrations; the genealogy of the Garver family, an early family in Justin, donated by Mrs. Lois Garver; 140's era photos of the Justin Elementary School faculty and students (all are identified, all too rare in old photos!), donated by

Curtis Talley (the faculty included Grace Parr and H. R. Proffer); documents relating to the Peters Colony settlers, and an almost-complete run of the *Justin Journal*, founded in 12.

The library, open M-F, 10-, is located in the former elementary school.

## A SUCCESSFUL PIT STOP MINI-FESTIVAL

The first-ever Pit Stop Mini-Festival, held at DCHM, on May 5, 200, was a great success, with great music and camaraderie. The performance on Friday night drew an enthusiastic crowd. Performers were Doug Felt, the featured musician of the

Festival; Sue Carpenter, Kate Moore Branson, Terry and Dorothy Sanders, and Bill and Jean Lee.

The Museum is delighted to sponsor the Denton Dulci-Doodlers and congratulates them on the successful outcome of their hard work.



*Featured musician Doug Felt*

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTY

### Carrollton:

#### Save that Façade!

Historical preservation enthusiasts in Carrollton are looking forward to the city's first historical overlay zone ordinance, this time for a single building, the Gravley Hardware building on the square. The Planning Commission will consider the ordi-

nance in July, and the City Council will take it up in August. The ordinance will protect the façade of the building, and in particular the neon sign for the now-defunct store, founded by an early Carrollton family.

Kudos to the Carrollton Historic Preservation Advisory Committee, an

appointed committee of the City Council, for their concern for the city's past.

Planning is also underway for a new historical marker for the DeWitt Perry Middle School, which was built in 13 by the WPA as the original Carrollton High School.



*Façade of the Gravley Hardware Building. Closeup of the neon sign.*



### Krum Society of Historic Preservation

#### Solving a mystery?

Paul Monschke of the KSHP is trying to track down the elusive "Mr. Krum" for whom the city of Krum was named. He has made two trips to St. Louis, MO, and has contacted several train museums, without success. According to the *Handbook of Texas Online*, A. R. Krum was an employee of the Gulf,

Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway, which purchased and platted the Krum townsite in the mid-1880s. If anyone has any leads, please e-mail Mr. Rod Barthold at [rodbarthold@aol.com](mailto:rodbarthold@aol.com).

#### Historical Markers Placed

The KSHP has had marker placement ceremonies for several businesses in Krum. Markers have been placed at the R. L. Cole Grain

Company elevator, the John Morris Chevrolet Company, the Lamm Grocery Store, and Farmers & Merchants State Bank. There are plans to place markers at the Finley Drug store, the Wilkins Dry Goods store, the Fowler Hardware store, and the old Post Office. In addition, several homes are under consideration for markers. Congratulations to this active group of preservationists.



*Markers for the Lamm Grocery and the R. L. Cole Grain Company, Krum*



## 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUE-WILSON REUNION OBSERVED IN SANGER

One of the oldest family gatherings in Denton County was held in Sanger, on June 25, when descendants of Peter Ray Rue met for the 71st time. Gatherings began as early as 11, but the official start of the reunion was on August 30, 13,

when the family came together to celebrate the birthday of Baxter Wilson, and the wedding of Jessie Belle Cherry of Sanger to Andy Barentine of Gainesville.

Peter Ray Rue's father, Lewis, and uncle, Jacob Rue were among the earliest settlers in

Denton County, arriving in Texas in the winter of 1853. They helped to form Rue Settlement, later known as Parvin, or Good Hope, in eastern Denton County.

Several attendees at this year's reunion were present for the reunion in 13.



*Members of the Peter Ray Rue family in front of their home in the Parvin community, near Prosper*

### Jack F. Schmitz, Jr.

The Denton County Historical Museum, Inc., has lost a long-time friend. Jack F. Schmitz, Jr., 87, died Saturday, July 8, 200. He was a native of Denton, born March 21, 11; he attended Denton schools, the University of North Texas, and the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service; he served in the Army Air Corps for six years. After his service in World War II, he married Gloria Spegal of Denton. He was a funeral director with Jack Schmitz and Son Funeral Home, and later owned and operated the Unpainted Furniture Store. He is survived by his wife, Gloria Schmitz, of Denton; a daughter and son-in-law, Janice and John Wittlif of Brownwood; and two sisters, Marie Smith of Tampa FL, and Carolyn McCloud of Palm Springs CA. The family requests memorials be made to DCHM, Inc., PO Box 2800, Denton TX 7202, the Denton Humane Society, PO Box 172, Denton 7202, or Ann's Haven Hospice, 21 W. Mulberry St., Denton 7201.



## THE CLOTHESLINE SAID SO MUCH

A clothesline was a news forecast  
To neighbors passing by.  
There were no secrets you could keep  
When clothes were hung to dry.

It also was a friendly link  
For neighbors always knew  
If company had stopped on by  
To spend a night or two.

For then you'd see the fancy sheets  
And towels on the line;  
You'd see the company tablecloths  
With intricate design.

The line announced a baby's birth  
To folks who lived inside  
As brand new infant clothes were hung  
So carefully with pride.

The ages of the children could  
So readily be known  
By watching how the sizes changed  
You'd know how much they'd grown.

It also told when illness struck,  
As extra sheets were hung;  
Then nightclothes, and a bathrobe, too  
Haphazardly were strung.

It said, "Gone on vacation now"  
When lines hung limp and bare.  
It told, "We're back!" when full lines sagged  
With not an inch to spare.

New folks in town were scorned upon  
If wash was dingy gray,  
As neighbors raised their brows, and looked  
Disgustedly away.

But clotheslines now are of the past  
For dryers make work less.  
Now what goes on inside a home  
Is anybody's guess.

I really miss that way of life.  
It was a friendly sign  
When neighbors knew each other best  
Because of that clothesline.

—Author unknown



## HOLLY'S CORNER

In 1841 the only inhabitants of what would become Denton County were occasional bands of Indians and the Texas Rangers on their trail. The settled areas of north central Texas were east in Lamar, Bowie and Fannin Counties. The Peters Colony agents wasted no time recruiting willing settlers. They came as single families and in wagon trains, crossing the Red River at Preston's Fort and traveling south into what is now Collin County. From there they spread west, taking land on creeks and rivers. Married men received grants of 40 acres, while single men received 320 acres.

Beginning in 1844 the settlers came. They picked their land with water and timber readily available. John King brought his family from Missouri. He was born in Gaston County, North Carolina in 1800, in the shadow of King's Mountain, named for his family. As a young man his wanderlust began. He moved to Indiana, where he married Delilah Cox and began raising a family. Before 1838 he moved the family to Missouri. Shortly after the birth of his youngest child, Delilah, born 1845, he moved into the Little Elm community. John died young, at the age of 4, and was buried under an oak tree on the farm. His widow, Delilah, constantly battled the elements and the Indians to protect her family. His children married into other new families coming to Denton County. Chancy and William Smith, John Balch, Frank Grace and Frank McCurley were his sons-in-law. Many families today can claim John King as a pioneer ancestor.

Captain William Middleton Roark married Cynthia London Hembrey in 183 in Warner County, Tennessee. In 1840 they are listed in the census of Polk County, Missouri. They moved to Arkansas briefly where they lost a daughter. They moved to Denton County, Texas in 184. W. M. Roark appears on the 1847 Denton County Tax list. They settled at Old Alton, the

first county seat, and built the family home, Old Hickory Hall. Capt. Roark was the first sheriff of Denton County and an early county Chief Justice.

The 1850 Census of Alton, Denton County, shows William Middleton Roark and his wife Cynthia and 7 children: James, Nancy, Thomas J., Mortimer, William, Lafayette, and Jasper. In a will written March 183 and filed 27 April 183, William Middleton Roark left his wife Cynthia (Syntha L.) all his estate. At the end of her widowhood or life it was to be left to the children equally. W. M. Roark is buried at Old Alton Cemetery but there is no marker. The will abstract was recorded in a ledger donated to the Museum by J. W. Jagoe.

The Roark children were prominent citizens in early Denton County. Lafayette Roark was in the livery business with his brother-in-law, H. T. Henderson, on East Hickory Street. His carriages were in great demand and were used to transport residents to many events. James M. Roark learned the pottery business from his father-in-law John Cranston. In 1871 James and J. A. Smith bought property near Little Elm and operated a pottery kiln until about 1884 when they sold to the Griffith Brothers. Mortimer B. was a Civil War veteran. He enlisted in Capt. T. W. Daugherty's company and was mustered into DeMorse's regiment, Gano's brigade. He fought at Cabin Creek, Indian Territory.

W. I. N. (Noah) Roark served in Co. A, 2th Texas Cavalry, during the Civil War. Jasper M. Roark never married. He stayed at home and cared for his aging mother and invalid brother, Thomas, until their deaths. He was the last of the family to die and was buried beside them in Old Alton Cemetery.

Aaron Belew was a native of the Union district, South Carolina. He was born in 1825, son of Samuel Belew. He married Mary Jane Belew, daughter of Zachariah Belew. The couple moved to Tennessee where they had seven children. Mr. Belew came to Denton County in 185 and settled between Pilot Point and Aubrey. When the Civil War started he enlisted in Jasper's company and did duty on the frontier. Two of his sons also served in the Confederacy until the end of the war. Mr. and Mrs. Belew were members of the Baptist Church. He owned 10 acres of black sandy land where he produced many diversified crops, including fruits and berries of all kinds. He died February 10, 1900 and is buried in Pilot Point Masonic Cemetery.

These brief sketches of three early settlers barely scratch the surface of the many pioneers who made Denton County a success in the early days. After the Civil War, another large group came from all parts of the country. In future columns we will explore more of these families. We invite our readers to share their pioneer stories with us.



*From left to right: John King, Capt. William M. Roark, Aaron Belew*

# DENTON COUNTY HISTORY THROUGH NEWSPAPERS: FROM THE CENTENNIAL EDITION OF THE DENTON RECORD-CHRONICLE, 1957

## Druggists Sold Varnish, Paint; Banks Collected Past Due Bills

A graphic picture of Denton's early business life is reflected in advertisements in a March 14, 1878, copy of the Denton Monitor.

On the north side of the square were J. M. McNeil & Co., dry-goods, fresh groceries, ladies & gent's hats, notions, all of which we offer at reduced prices for cash or produce," and Marshall Fulton, attorney in the Exam Building.

Also on the north side was D. A. Robinson & Co., real estate agents (D. A. Robinson and H. M. Spalding.)

On the northeast corner of the square customers could find Griffith & Dawson, "wagon makers' material - just received nails, iron, steel, axes, bellows, vises, barbed wire a specialty," and P. Miner & Co., blacksmiths at Hyatt Corner.

### LAW AND LAND

Piner & Austin (F. E. Piner and J. Austin) advertised their law and land office on the east side.

On the south side were T. W. Daugherty, "banker and dealer in exchange, will do a general banking business, collections promptly attended to," and T. B. Reston, J. T. Morland, proprietor, "cash paid for all kinds of cattle."

The southwest corner had Dr. F. M. Faught, "office in Faught Bros. drug store;" and L. L. Stroud, "groceries, dry goods and general merchandise."

### VARNISH AND DRUGS

On the west side were Lipscomb & Burton Druggists and Pharmacists (C. Lipscomb and J. R. Burton). "Always keep on hand a large and well selected stock of drugs, medicines, paints, oil, varnish, window glass, putty and everything usually kept in a first-class store;" the Star Store offering dry goods, and Dr. R. S. Ross Drug Store, "dealer in drugs, paints, stationery, jewelry and clocks."

Other businesses advertising were:

J. W. Kjellberg, undertaker, "keeps on hand all kinds of ready-made coffins, shop at his old stand, Pecan St."

Harry Brothers on Oak Street, advertising a stove at \$13.

The Lacy House, Mrs. S. E. Lacy, proprietress. "My motto still is, as it has been, to furnish the best the market affords."

### TEETH YANKED

Dr. T. G. Ames, dentist. "Patronage solicited and satisfaction given."

C. L. Herbert, physician, office in McKnight & Watkins Drug Store.

Cockrell & Scripture (A. Cockrell, R. C. Scripture). "dealers in staple and fancy groceries."

D. Kowsky, groceries in the D. H. Frye Meat Market.

Denton Foundry, J. M. Rank, proprietor, Leyd Denton County.

### TUITION RATES

"The school will open on Monday, March 17, and close on Friday, July 4 1884," the notice reads. "To those within the corporate limits of the town of Denton and within the ages of 8 and 14, whose names are enrolled by the assessor, tuition will be free. To those not entitled to the public fund, the following are the rates of tuition per month:

"First class—higher mathematics, ancient languages, etc., \$4.  
 "Second class—English grammar, geography, natural philosophy, chemistry, arithmetic, elementary algebra, etc., \$1.  
 "Third class—spelling, reading, writing, primary arithmetic, grammar and geography, \$1.  
 "Music with use of instrument (extra) \$3.  
 "Incidental fee, paid on entering, 50 cents."



DENTON'S FIRST CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL. Opened in 1884



PIONEER WOMAN—This statue of the Pioneer Woman on the T.C.W. Campus commemorates the wives of early settlers, the women who were butcher, baker and candlestick maker, literally, while also being wife, mother, gardener, weaver and Indian fighter.

Denton's first public school was opened for a four-month term in 1884 in the old Central School building. Denton citizens started working for a public school system in 1882. In October of that year they voted a tax of 50 cents on \$100 valuation to raise a school fund. Before that the only school money available was drawn from the state.



### CULTURE ON STRINGS AND HORNS

Posing with their instruments are members of Denton's first musical organization. They are, standing, left in right, Prof. Charles S. Terrell, clarinet; Hugo B. Grant, bassoon; Oliver Thumason, cornet; Professor Bardsley, concert; Prof. J. A. Sanders, bass viol; Professor Edwards, director of music; sitting, left in right, they are Professor Thumason, viola; Ed Cook,

violin; Miss Carolina Busdell, viola; instructor, Joe Wright, violin; Mrs. M. B. Terrell, violin; Miss Ann Terrell, viola; Mrs. J. A. Sanders, viola; Miss Allison, violin; Eda Saunders, piano; Stella Terrell, viola; and Miss Allison, cello. (Photo courtesy of Denton Public Library)

Denton's musical past goes back a long way



