



Making History in the Prairie

Grand Prairie Historical Organization

GPHO Volume VII

February 2007

MEETING LOCATION CHANGE

The next meeting of the GP Historical Organization is **FEBRUARY 21, 11:30 am at The Ruthe Jackson Center.**

Our Speaker for the February 21st meeting will be

Michael V. Hazel, Ph.D

TURNING POINTS IN DALLAS HISTORY



Why did Dallas become the leading city in North Central Texas and eventually one of the largest cities in the United States? Why not Farmers Branch or Lancaster, which are nearly as old? Or even Grand Prairie? One hint is the railroads (certainly a factor in the founding too) and later Love Field. But others include its selection as County Seat, and winning the annual State Fair of Texas, the Federal Reserve Bank, and the Texas Centennial Exposition. These events, and others, spearheaded by deter-

mined civic leaders, helped Dallas forge ahead of its neighbors.

Michael V. Hazel is a native Dallasite and a fifth-generation Texan. He graduated from Highland Park High School and earned his B.A. in history from SMU and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago.

For the past 25 years, Dr. Hazel has concentrated on local history, working for Old City Park from 1981 to 1988, and for the Dallas Historical Society from 1988 to 1992 (serving both organizations as Interim Director). In 1992 he began organizing the

historical archives for the Belo Corporation (publisher of *The Dallas Morning News*). For the past few years, he was part of a team of historians working to create a museum of Dallas County history in the Old Red Courthouse.

Since 1989 Dr. Hazel has edited *Legacies*, a regional history journal jointly published by four local historical organizations. He has also edited and written several books, including ***Dallas Reconsidered (1995), Dallas: A History of Big D (1997), Dallas: A Dynamic Century (1998), Stanley Marcus from A to Z (2000), The Dallas Public Library: Celebrating***

a Century of Service (2001), and Historic Photos of Dallas (2006). He served as photo editor of *Dynamic Dallas* (2003).

Dr. Hazel has also taught Dallas history at SMU and museum studies at the University of North Texas. For the past eight years he has coordinated a Dallas History Conference co-sponsored by twelve local history groups.



UPDATE: Historic Grand Prairie, Texas

To give you an idea how the Historic Book is coming, I thought it would be best to just give you some of the text directly from my notes:

“All that wheeling and dealing might have left some residents scratching their heads, but it’s safe to say at least one Grand Prairian was paying it no heed. Mrs. A. Howell, a 45-year-old mother of

five daughters, had been adjudged insane in a Dallas courtroom earlier that year and removed to the “lunatic asylum” at Terrell. Although the newspaper account doesn’t mention which doctor diagnosed the poor woman, there’s a good chance its readers took extra care to keep their feet dry: *Her insanity dates from a trip last year to*

Tennessee where she went to visit her father, whom she had not seen in thirteen years. While there, she got her feet wet, contracting a cold under which she swung loose from the moorings of reason and drifted helplessly into the ocean of insanity, in which condition she was brought home. In the court yesterday,

MEETING LOCATION

This month we are going to meet at the Ruthe Jackson Center for lunch. Obviously the cost of lunch at RJC is higher, so Carol Liggitt Bell has offered to pay the difference in the cost. Thanks to Carol, the lunch will remain at our normal cost of \$5 for GPHO Members. Non-Members will be \$10.

For this meeting it’s even more important to make a reservation for lunch. We welcome everyone, lunch or not, but if you do want to eat,



Jim Gatewood

Those of you who attended the last GPHO meeting know how special it was. Jim Gatewood gave a fantastic presentation on his book about the Top of the Hill Casino. What a book! I could not put it down once I started reading it. If you are ever interested in reading a great book about our local Dallas and Fort Worth History, this is the one. It’s fantastic. *Thank you Mr. Gatewood.*

Dues are due for the new year. Please help us support the organization. Thank you to so many that have responded with their dues. If not, please send your annual dues in today.

Membership Drive

GPHO members are being encouraged to recruit new members.

We are committing to having better speakers at our meeting, and will try to have our meetings at the RJC. If you know of someone that you could bring, please plan to have them attend our next meeting.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need Volunteers to help organize pictures and articles at the Museum. We have several fireproof file cabinets available now, we just need to start filing them. There are pictures and newspaper articles that need to be categorized and filed.

BUS TOUR

Mike Hazel also does a formal bus tour of Dallas for the Dallas Historical Society. It includes historic downtown and vicinity. The next one will be Saturday, March 24. The tour costs \$35 for DHS members and \$45 for non-members and includes lunch. For more info, you can go to the DHS website: www.dallashistory.org



Life Members of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization

Carol Bell, Grant Bell, Brian W. Bingham, L.R. Cannon, Ouida Chapman Lewis, Lisa Chennault Brown, Helen Chennault, Thomas Chennault, Thomas B Chennault, City of Grand Prairie Marketing. H. Victor Copeland, Jerry Corley, Charles and Janice England, Olive Gallo-way, Norma Hale, Lee D. Herring, Thomas Hight, Jorja Jackson Clemson, Marie Kerr Stoffebeme, Blythe Kizziar, Duane McGuffey, Lynn Motley, Betty Phillips, Charles Powers, Bob Roberts, Susan Shuffler, Fynlon and Eugenia Simpson, Ouida Smith, Amy Sprinkles, Angela Sutton Giessner, Donald Taylor, Ruthe Thompson Jackson, Laura Thompson Potter



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The Grand Prairie Historical Organization's purpose is to search out, record, collate, preserve, and pass on to the next generation, the history of Grand Prairie, Texas, and its Southwest Dallas County environs, including the appropriate marking of authentic historical sites.

The dues year of the Organization shall be from January 1 in each year through Dec. 31 of the same year. The following classes of membership apply:

Regular Membership: The annual dues for single members shall be fifteen dollars (\$15.00) and twenty-five (\$25.00) for couples .

Life Membership: Any person 45 years or older who contributes \$200 shall be a member for life without further payment of dues.

Gold Star Membership: Payment of 10 years in advance, \$150 (no age limit).

Patron Membership: Any person who contributes five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or more to the Organization shall be a Life Member thereof and shall, in addition thereof be appropriately recognized as a Patron of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization.

Corporate Membership: Any small business that contributes \$250.00 shall be classified as a corporate member.

Dues should be mailed to Mrs. Giessner. Her information is listed to the left.

Two freight interurban cars photographed from original city water works elevated water storage tank about 1921. The road in the foreground is Dallas-Ft. Worth Pike which was finished in April 1921. Note Jefferson Avenue does not exist.. Today you will find Ford & Son Inc. tax office, 303 W. Jefferson right behind the interurban cars. A similiar water pond was on the south side of railroad embakement on the right hand side of photo where Benton Ford, Billy Powers and others in the neighborhood fished for crawfish.