



Making History in the Prairie

Grand Prairie Historical Organization

Volume XV—Bingham

February 2009

Our meeting is February 19th at 11:30am and will be held at the Mountain Creek Retirement Facility

2305 Corn Valley Rd, Grand Prairie, Texas 75051, 972-237-2515

Please call Angela Giessner for reservations, 972-262-5151—seating will be limited

Your cost will be the same, \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members. Buffet style lunch.

Our Speaker for the next meeting will be:

Terrell Falk



Ms. Falk has a long standing love of museums. After earning her Master's Degree, she served as Director of Marketing and Communications for the Houston Museum of Natural Science for thirteen years before entering the private sector as Vice President of Marketing and Distribution for JQH Film Entertainment, a documentary film production and distribution company. However, during her time away from museums, she continued to volunteer and visit every museum she could across the globe where her business travels took her. Most recently, Ms. Falk was Vice President for Marketing and Communications for Cinemark Holdings of Plano for nearly 10 years. In January 2008, she was named President of Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture. Ms. Falk has served on boards and committees of several professional organizations and as a member of the board of the Dallas Museum of Nature and Science.

Early Picture of the Old Red Court House in Downtown Dallas.



The sign at the Rock Creek Barbecue



John Thorne— on political day at Rock Creek Barbecue Club





Rock Creek Barbecue Club

Where the finest meet, eat and enjoy good fellowship

Around 1943, in Downtown Grand Prairie at a regular checker game, W.C. "Bill" Morgan (V.P. Grand Prairie State) and several good ol' boys decided to start getting together every so often at Forney Keas Ranch and cook up a mess of Chicken and Barbeque. That was the beginning of what is still today the Rock Creek Barbecue Club in Grand Prairie.

Back in 1943. the Forney Keas Ranch was located about where Lone Star Park is today. For over 60 years, these members have been part of a third-generation men's social club that celebrate manly things like drinking, talking, eating barbecue with your hands, spitting, and joking. Today is no different, with members that love to keep those traditions alive.

Around 1952 they moved to the wooded area above Rock Creek which was just behind the bend in Duncan Perry Road. This was on the west side of Rock Creek close to NW 19th St. after you pass over the old Turnpike. It was the first-street to the left after where the old Exxon station was located.

From there, down the hill and a little to the right was the Thompson Farm. Charles Powers account was, *"Rock Creek BBQ was within 50 feet of the bridge. In the beginning it was 10ft poles with limbs or thatch placed on the roof to give shade because the meetings I went to were held about noon"*.

In the very early 1990's they had the meeting at the old Coors Distribution building. Then about 1993 they moved to the current location on Wildlife Parkway about ½ mile west of Belt Line Road on the north side of the road.

Elmer Davidson is the head cook and bottle washer. On the last Sunday of every month (excluding December, January, February and March) Elmer cooks up a mess of good food. The menu includes Beef Brisket, Pork Spare Ribs, Chicken, Sausage, Cold Slaw, Ranch Style beans Lemonade and Beer. And as always, it's *"all you can eat"*.



Life Members of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization

Judy Armstrong, Billy Joe Armstrong, Carol Bell, Grant Bell, Brian W. Bingham, Verna Brown, L.R. Cannon, Ouida Chapman Lewis, Lisa Chennault Brown, Helen Chennault, Thomas Chennault, Thomas B Chennault, City of Grand Prairie Marketing, Marge Copeland, H. Victor Copeland, Jerry Corley, Cheryl Friman Dover, Charles and Janice England, Kirk and Marcie England, Olive Galloway, Norma Hale, Marvin J (Jack) Hays, Lee D. Herring, Thomas Hight, Jorja Jackson Clemson, Marie Kerr Stufflebeme, Blythe Kizziar, Duane McGuffey, Kenneth R. Miller, Lynn Motley, Betty Phillips, Charles Powers, Bob Roberts, Susan Shuffler, Fynlon and Eugenia Simpson, Ouida Daugherty Smith, Amy Sprinkles, Angela Sutton Giessner, Donald Taylor, Ruthe Thompson Jackson, Laura Thompson Potter, Paul and Madie Vernon

There is no real agenda except to enjoy each other's company. A prayer and the pledge to the flag are among the few serious activities at the RCBC. As Elmer says, "It don't take us long to get finished with our business"

After the war in 1945 Elmer Davidson went to work for the Grand Prairie Texan until it was bought out by the Grand Prairie Daily News in 1958. He retired in 1988 and is still a dedicated RCBC member and cook.

Elmer tells a good story about a sharpshooter they called the "Shootin Sheriff of Athens, TX", Jess Sweeten. Remember the signs all over Dallas that said "Thanks all of you for helping O.L.Nelms make another million." Well Mr. Nelms would hold a \$100 bill in his mouth and the "Shootin Sheriff of Athens" would shoot a hole through Benjamin Franklin in the folded bill. Many people wanted to let the Shootin Sheriff take a shot, including GP Footballer Charlie Taylor and DeSoto Mayor Hap Chandler who wanted to use his campaign card.

In 1986 Democratic county chairman Bob Greenberg and his GOP counterpart, Fred Meyer, strapped on six guns for a mock shootout with decidedly unlive ammunition.



Left—Dick "Chief" Colley and Dale Milford – Weatherman at WFAA in the 1960's and United States Congressman from 1973-1979.

RCBC was known for being a political meeting place and most all representatives, sheriffs, judges attended regularly. Charles Powers remembers "*I guess you could say everyone on Main Street attended except maybe for most ministers. Of course, my Dad and most of the volunteer firemen were present. I would say in the 40 and 50's there would be about 200 men at each meeting.*"



Left—Dale Milford and William "Bill" Bowles

Officers today include Roma Skinner (Speaker of the House), Elmer Davidson, Bubba Witherspoon (President), Byron Looker, Judge Hoffman (Chaplain) and Hal Thorne (Secretary). RCBC is still a men's only social club with approximately 150 Members. Dues are \$35 a year or \$250 for a life membership, and each meal is \$12.50. For more information, contact Hal Thorne at (469) 212-0633.



Dick "Chief" Colley rides the elephant on Father – Son day at Rock Creek.

"For men who enjoy good barbecue, clean fun and a desire to promote good fellowship"



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**Officers**

Lynn Motley—President
Brian W. Bingham—VP and
Newsletter Editor
Susie Roberts—Secretary
Carol Bell—Treasurer

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The Shootin' Sheriff of Athens at Work shooting a pencil in the mouth of his assistant

Rock Creek Barbecue Club—
Sometime prior to the summer
of 1956. Charles Powers helped identify the following: Cliff in front was the cook, 1st row squatting from the right is Dr. Bill Colip, next are several of the Sargent family, Dee Perkins, 7th is Don Small (large arms), next row is Mayor Harry Turner, same row from the left 5th person is Bud Hardeman, next is Jake Swadley, next in the dark shirt is Charles Powers, Judge Archie Price. 4th row from the left 15th person is John Daughtery, 17th on that same row is Maurice Hampton, 5th row in the middle with the hat tilted back was the City Attorney at that time,

Grimland
GRAND PRAIRIE