



Making History in the Prairie

Grand Prairie Historical Organization

GP HO Volume VII

June 2007

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION CHANGE

The next meeting of the GP Historical Organization is

June 14th at 11:30 at the The Ruthe Jackson Center.

Our Speaker for the June 14th meeting will be

Jim Gatewood

A biography of Sheriff Bill Decker of Dallas County



DECKER'S LAW

Speak softly and carry a Thompson Sub-Machinegun.

While Elliot Ness and his "Untouchables" were fighting Al Capone in Chicago, Bill Decker was fighting crime in the city of Dallas. He (unlike Ness) had no federal funds or shotgun squads to back him up.

Sheriff Bill Decker was a "Modern Knight", alone without any armor in a dangerous land. He was armed only with his ironclad morals, courage, determination, and his favorite weapon: the **Thompson Sub-machinegun.**

Despite the smug, pious, self-righteous image that Dallas has courted for the last century, there has always been a lascivious twinkle in the old girl's eye.

Dallas was a wide-open town with its secrets a story that needed to be told.

Jim is a child of the depression, born 11 days before the market crash in 1929. His father, a Chicago stockbroker, like so many others, was wiped out in that crash. Jim's mother put him in a laundry basket and placed him in the back seat of their 1929 Hudson automobile, and the family left for California, where the banks had not closed.

A rear axle on the Hudson broke in McKinney, Texas. Unable to pay for repairs, the auto mechanic told Mr. Gatewood of a bank in Dallas that would loan him money if he had the papers showing his car was paid for. Mr. Gatewood caught the inter-

urban to Dallas in search of the tallest building down town, the Magnolia building. Located on the ground floor of the building was the Mercantile & Securities Bank.

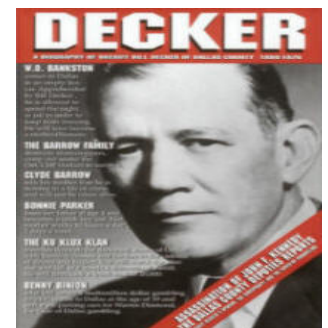
A young banker by the name of Robert Thornton made the loan to Jim's father and introduced him to John Rauscher and Charlie Pierce who ran the securities department of the bank. Mr. Pierce offered Mr. Gatewood a job, and Jim and his family remained in Dallas.

Jim Gatewood has written four books, "Decker, a Biography of Sheriff Bill Decker of Dallas County," "The Legend of Benny Binion, Dallas Gambler & Mob Boss," "Captain Will Fritz, and the Dallas Mafia," and a book about "J. Frank Norris, Top O' Hill Casino - Lew Jenkins and the Texas Oil Rich".

Mr. Gatewood is

also the Founder of the Dallas County Assassination Review Board that closed the JFK Murder Case.

His works not only chronicle the lives of three dynamic Dallas men, but, perhaps, more importantly preserves a colorful, previously unpublished segment of Dallas History.



UPDATE: Historic Grand Prairie, Texas

The history book is in the proofing stage now. There have been several eyes review it, and in the next week it should be back in the publisher's hands. We expect delivery in September of this year. After reading it over, I can tell you I'm more excited than ever. Kathy Goolsby has done a great job, and it is something of which I think we will all be proud.

Grand Prairie High School Class of 1943

GPHS Class of 1943 reunion was held at the Prairie Lakes Golf Course Pavillion on April 28 and catered by our good friends at *Eddlemon's*. Of the 54 graduates 19 are deceased, my father Barley Bingham being one of them. 10 of the graduates attended and are pictured here.



Seated: Goldene Williamson Wammack, Standing (left to right); Wesley Keas, LaVera Knox Kimbrel, Neva McLeroy Wetmore, Dot McLelland Casey, Zelma Black Adkins, Mary Reed Brennan, Daphne Harkey Jose, Norma Robertson Hale, David Lacey, Class President

MEETING LOCATION

Again for June we are going to meet at the Ruthe Jackson Center for lunch. This month, Lynn Motley has offered to pay the difference in the cost. Thanks to Lynn, 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, we need to know ahead of time.

CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE MAYORS

1992 – Present	Charles England		
1990-1992	Duane McGuffey	1949-1953	E. Carlyle Smith
1984-1990	Jerry Debo	1937-1949	G. H. Turner
1982-1984	Anne Gresham	1935-1937	George N. Doyal
1980-1982	James Weems	1923-1935	G. H. Turner
1976-1980	Weldon Parkhill	1922-1923	T. W. Wright
1972-1976	William Bowles	1920-1922	T. G. Collins
1970-1972	Joe Colwell	1918-1920	L. O. Turner
1962-1970	C. P. Waggoner	1917-1918	J. T. Owens
1961-1962	Eugene Goree	1914-1916	E. E. Hall
1959-1961	James Weems	1911-1913	R. E. Means
1955-1959	C. R. Sargent	1910-1911	P. A. Geeo
1953-1955	John W. Daugherty	1909-1910	R. E. Means



Mayor England

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.



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

The Alphonse E. Scheppler Family

“They Came, They Stayed”

Back in 1876, over one hundred years ago, two French families, Antoine Faucher and his son-in-law, Alphonse Scheppler, and their families came to Grand Prairie.

The two families liked what they saw – bought land – and stayed! It is interesting to note today that one great grand daughter of Alphonse Scheppler, Carol Ann Liggett Anderson Bell, still lives in Grand Prairie (with a brief intermission to Dallas, Lubbock, Arlington, and Ohio), 131 years later. Carol is the Treasurer of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization and serves on the Dallas County Historical Commission. Some of you reading this newsletter may remember other descendants of the Scheppler family who made Grand Prairie their life long home. They are Mrs. George Stubbs (daughter); and Louise Stubbs Irvin, Varina Hight, Lottye Reeves, Faucher Liggett, Dan Liggett, Marguerite Scheppler Rogers Malcolm and Paul Scheppler (grandchildren). Paul Scheppler still lives in the Palestine area.

Mr. and Mrs. Antoine Faucher came to Grand Prairie from Kankakee, Illinois. A deed dated December 13, 1876, records the purchase of 160 acres by Antoine Faucher from D. Jordan. In 1880, Antoine Faucher, widowed, married Louise Grimm of Alsace Lorraine, France. To this union were born two children, A. J. Faucher of Arlington and Matilda Faucher who became Mrs. George P. Stubbs of 119 North Street, Grand Prairie.

The first family home was on top of the hill on Tarrant Road, but in 1889, Antoine Faucher built a new family home which was located on N.W. 7th Street, north of the Church of Christ.

Also in 1876, Alphonse E. Scheppler and his bride, Agnes Faucher Scheppler, daughter of Antoine, bought 160 acres adjoining the Faucher farm. To this union was born one daughter, Dina Scheppler. In 1883, the Schepplers returned to Kankakee, Illinois, where another child, Ernest T. Scheppler was born.

The family moved to France, living there from 1883 to 1888 during which time Dina attended school for five years. While in France, the family served as missionaries for the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The family returned to Grand Prairie in

1888.

In 1897, Dina Scheppler was married to George Liggett. In 1907, the Liggett's built a home which is still located at 322 Hill Street. Until about five years ago, the home was continuously occupied by descendants of the Liggett family. In 1925, a new family home was built by the Liggett family at 401 College Street in Grand Prairie. Mrs. Liggett resided in that home until her death in 1961. The home is now the office of Dr. Charles Dell, a descendent of another long time Grand Prairie family. The Liggett's four children served the community in various ways. Varina Liggett Hight was the first Glee Club Director and Sophomore English teacher at Grand Prairie High; Mrs. Lottye Liggett Reeves taught fourth grade for many years at Austin Elementary; Faucher F. Liggett, continued with his agrarian roots by farming the family land; and, Daniel (Dan) Liggett farmed the family land for many years and then became a "Million Dollar Salesman" for Nabor's Trailers. Varina was married to "Stump" Hight, from another long term Grand Prairie family. Faucher was married to Martha Underwood whose family had deep roots in the community in the First Baptist Church, the Park Boards, the First Public Library, and the first Garden Clubs. The children of the Liggett family resided in Grand Prairie for the rest of their lives where they were a vital part of the community and active members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The land for the church was donated by the family. Dina Liggett and her children tried to donate land for a Seventh Day Hospital in Grand Prairie, but the Adventist Convention thought the location being donated by the Huguley family better suited their needs.

Faucher Liggett worked for 25 years delivering prescriptions (and hamburgers if you liked), at Millar Drug Company in downtown Grand Prairie. It was noted in the newspaper that Faucher was the "Goodwill Ambassador" for Millar Drug. Those of us, who knew and loved him, would have called him the "Goodwill Ambassador" for our town.

Carol Ann Liggett Anderson Bell

“Grandpa was the "goodwill ambassador" for everyone he knew but especially for us, his family! What a great person he was! We were truly blessed to have had him in our lives.” Karla Roberts (Carol's Daughter)



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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.



Members of Grand Prairie High School Class of 1936-37

Attending Class Reunion in 1987 at Hilton Hotel, Arlington Texas

Top row left to right: Evelyn Williamson, Paul Chennault, Frances Garrett, Victor Copeland, Dow Douthitt
Front row left to right: Maretta Lucas Ragsdale, Beth Ray Speck, Katherine Chennault, Marjorie Hight Spikes Copeland, Agnes Brown