



Newsletter

August 2025

August 21, 2025 — GPHO General Meeting

6:30 p.m. — 8:00 p.m. at the G.P. Historical Museum

AN INTERACTIVE STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE

BY STEPHANIE MORENO



The August meeting will be the 50th Birthday of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization. In addition to cake, punch, and snacks, a program called “An Interactive Stroll Down Memory Lane” will be moderated by Stephanie Moreno. Over the years, Stephanie has served as President, Secretary, Museum Director, and Archivist on the board of the GPHO. This program will be a little different than normal. As the title states, we are going to have an interactive stroll down memory lane. As your moderator, Stephanie will give you a

topic and she will want to hear from as many of you who have a memory or an opinion on the topic. After the program, everyone will have time to mingle to privately discuss what someone else may have said. For instance, you may learn the person across the room may have worked at the same place or attended the same school so you may want to reconnect. The topics are going to go in order from birth to death. Come ready to take the stroll.

There will be a brief business meeting, including the election of 2025-2026 officers, followed by birthday cake and punch. Come celebrate and reminisce!

Officers serving with Mrs. Jackson are president-elect and program chairman, Mrs. H.V. Taylor; secretary-treasurer, Ray Phillips; and public relations director, Mrs. David E. Read.



MRS. DAVID READ AND MRS. V. H. TAYLOR
Grand Prairie Historical Organization

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear Grand Prairie Historical Organization Members,

Summer is winding down, for many, and school will be starting soon. The GPHO board is staying busy facilitating displays, events, changes to the grounds, fundraising, and always making plans for the future.

You are invited to celebrate the 50th Birthday of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization with us at the museum on **Thursday, August 21, 6:30 p.m.** for the General Meeting. This will be a fun audience-interactive program followed with birthday cake to celebrate.



MEMBERS - YOU are needed. You are invited to show off your talents by volunteering. If you like to talk about GP history, we've got a place for you. Call the museum at 972-639-3388 and speak to the museum director. You can leave a message if the museum is closed.

GPHO is always in need of monetary donations, so we are, again, joining the North Texas Giving Day event in the hope of receiving funds to increase the number of display cases, purchase archival preservation items, pay the utilities and maintenance of the building, and have funds to hold events. Please consider giving a donation.

You will see more information about all of these things in this newsletter and on Facebook.

Thank you for your support of GPHO.

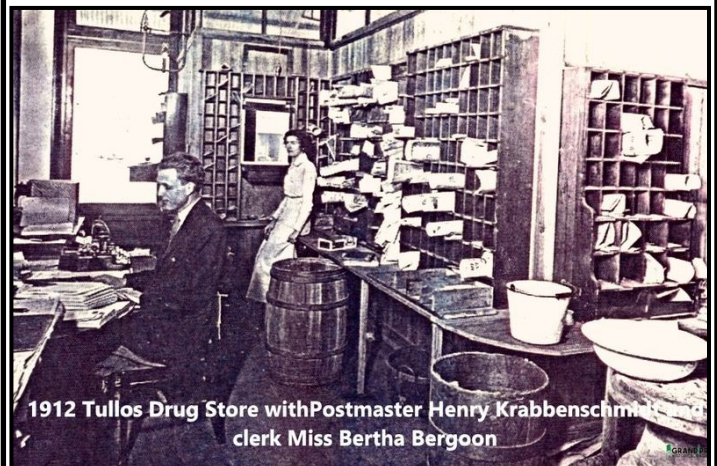
Bonnie Steever Cockrum

2024-2025 GPHO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bonnie Cockrum, President president@gphotx.org
Juanita Wagener, Vice President vicepresident@gphotx.org
Stephanie Moreno, Secretary secretary@gphotx.org
Larry Barnes, Treasurer treasurer@gphotx.org
Kay Dunbar, Education/Events Director events@gphotx.org
James Barnes, Museum Director museum@gphotx.org
Mike Hutchins, Technology Director technology@gphotx.org
Kathy Ritterhouse, Communications Director
newsletter@gphotx.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Juanita Wagener, Membership membership@gphotx.org
Kathy Ritterhouse, Newsletter newsletter@gphotx.org
Larry Barnes, Fundraising
Kathy Ritterhouse, Significant Landmarks
Mike Hutchins, Technology
Larry Barnes, Financial Review



1912 Tullos Drug Store with Postmaster Henry Krabbenschmidt
clerk Miss Bertha Bergoon

WHITE TAVERN



The White Tavern was a bar and restaurant that opened in about 1947. It was located at 518 W. Main in Grand Prairie. The owners were Max and Mert Ford.

This photo shows the interior of the White Tavern. The menu included "Cut T-Bone Steak" for 50 cents, "Half Spring Chicken" for 65 cents, and "Grilled Club Steak" for 50 cents. Owners Max and Mert are behind the bar. Those standing in the photo are (from left to right): Christopher C. Barrett, Flick Hale and Orman Florence.

Photo courtesy of Jan Barrett



ELECTION OF 2025-2026 OFFICERS

The election of officers for the Grand Prairie Historical Organization will be held at the August 21st General Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Museum. You must be present to vote. Members who are current in their dues are able to vote. The GPHO Nominating Committee presents the following names for officers for the 2025-2026 GPHO Executive Board:

President: Kay Dunbar

Vice President: Jenna Pecor

Secretary: Jonathan Stegmann

Treasurer: Larry Barnes

The Committee, chaired by Vice President Juanita Wagener, consisted of Cheryl Dover and Janice Barrett. We thank our members for stepping up to be a special part of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization. Please note that nominations for the officers can also be made from the floor at the time of the election, but those nominated must agree before their name is submitted. The term of office begins on October 1 and extends to September 30 of the following year with Board meetings held once a month.

D.A.R. TIME CAPSULE OPENED



As a Bicentennial project in 1976, the Texas Bluebonnet Chapter of the NSDAR, raised funds to purchase a replica of the Liberty Bell, cast in France and mounted in a structure designed by Smith & Warder located in front of City Hall. The bell was dedicated on July 4, 1976, and at the same time, the DAR buried a time capsule to be opened in 2000. When the capsule (which is now in the museum) was opened, it was discovered that water had penetrated the capsule and destroyed the items inside. The DAR members then buried a second time capsule, this time in the backyard of the Historic Copeland Home. The unveiling of this capsule took place at the Copeland Home on June 14, 2025. GPHO member Jan Barrett was present for the original time capsule and assisted in the unveiling of the 2025 capsule. An interesting array of photos, pamphlets, newspaper articles, and other items survived their quarter-century burial. Unfortunately, the Texas Bluebonnet Chapter has not survived, so the ceremony was conducted by the Lucretia Council Cochran Chapter, based in Arlington. GPHO President Bonnie Cockrum opened the Copeland Home after the ceremony.



The Grand Prairie Historical Organization and Museum appreciates your help as we continue to collect, preserve, and showcase the wonderful history of Grand Prairie, Texas.

Please consider a donation.

THANK YOU!

Donations start now and end on September 18. GPHO can qualify for matching funds, depending on the amount of donations.

↓↓↓↓ Please click here to make a donation. ↓↓↓↓

<https://www.northtexasgivingday.org/story/Y4zc7g#matching-grants>

If you prefer to send a check directly to the museum, please make it out to GPHO and mail it to:

Grand Prairie Historical Organization
1516 W. Main St., Grand Prairie, TX 75050
Attention: Larry Barnes

FOUND IN THE MUSEUM



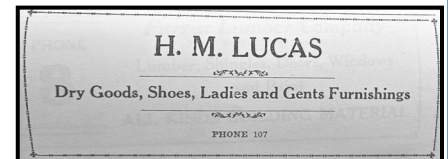
The H.M. (Hugh Miller) Lucas Dry Goods Store was an important fixture of downtown Grand Prairie for over 30 years. It was located at 105 East Main Street. The mercantile desk cabinet in the museum sat on the counter at the store, holding money and receipts. (Note: The legs have been added by museum staff.)

Hugh Lucas was the son of Thomas and Mahala (Cate) Lucas, pioneers who settled in North Texas in 1856. They made their home in the newly-formed community of Sowers (now part of Irving, east of Belt Line and south of Hwy 181). Hugh served as postmaster for Sowers from 1896 to 1903 when the Sowers post office was discontinued and moved to Grand Prairie. Hugh's older brother, H. J. (Henry Julius) moved to Grand Prairie in 1906 where he operated a grocery store and an automobile business. Henry also served as a Dallas County deputy sheriff and on the Grand Prairie City Council. Henry's daughter, Louise Lucas, was a beloved supporter of GPHO and of Grand Prairie's history and (I think) is responsible for GPHO

acquiring this treasure which "lived" at the Historic Copeland Home prior to moving to the museum.



Hugh married Dannie Webster Price in 1897, and they started their family in Sowers where Hugh operated a grocery store and the post office. In 1910, he moved to Grand Prairie and opened H.M. Lucas Dry Goods. "Dry goods" were products such as textile fabrics, ready-to-wear clothing, toiletries, and "grocery items" (such as tobacco, sugar, flour, and coffee) that did not contain liquid.

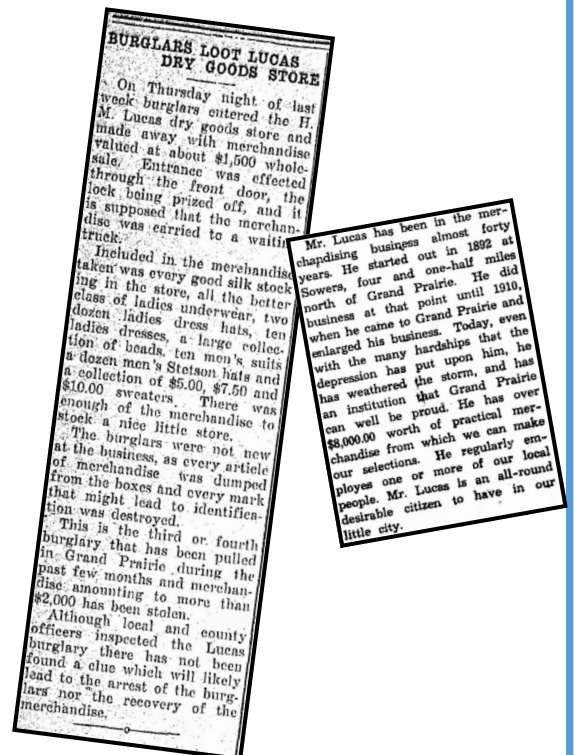


Hugh operated his dry goods store for over three decades. He became a prominent man in Grand Prairie, and, in October of 1930, he joined a group of local business and professional men, including Dr. H.V. Copeland, J.F.

Waggoner, W.G. Liggett, J.Y. Yeager, G.H. Turner, and others, to charter the Grand Prairie State Bank.

On the night of January 1st of 1931, the H.M. Lucas Dry goods store was burglarized. Taken were items such as "every good silk stocking in the store, all the better class of ladies underwear, two dozen ladies dress hats, ten ladies dresses, a large collection of beads, ten men's suits, a dozen men's Stetson hats, and a collection of sweaters. There was enough of the merchandise to stock a nice little store." The loss was devastating to Hugh Lucas, valued at \$1,500 wholesale (or about \$30,000 today).

Hugh Lucas continued to operate his store through the hard years of the depression. After over 50 years in the retail business (counting his years in Sowers), he closed his Grand Prairie store in the mid-1940s. The *Grand Prairie Texan* editor declared him to be "an all-round desirable citizen to have in our little city." H.M. Lucas died in June 1948 (at the age of 73) and is buried in the Sowers Cemetery.



HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY TO BOB!



Happy (Belated) Birthday to one of our favorite GPHO members who recently turned 90 years young. GPHO is fortunate to have several nonagenarians among our members. Bob Johnson is our newest. Bob is the City of Grand Prairie's oldest living Fire Department retiree. Friends, family, and fire department employees past and present gathered at the FireHouse Gastro Park to celebrate and Channel 8 news showed up to cover the major milestone. Here's to many more, Bob!!

LIBRARY RE-OPENING

The Main Library officially re-opened the main entrance on July 24th. Library Director Peter Sime, who is a GPHO supporter and member, conducted the ribbon-cutting event. The majestic front entrance boasts a larger sign to make the library more eye-catching, especially from Highway 161. In the entry corridor, a bright mural, painted by a library employee, grabs your attention. The renovation also added programming space at the front of the library. Be sure to CHECK IT OUT!



DO YOU KNOW???

Do YOU know . . . how many music recording stars have lived or recorded in Grand Prairie?? Neither do I, but I guarantee it's more than you'd guess!

From about 1950 until about 1990, a small house at 1418 Small Street in Grand Prairie, served as a recording studio for a variety of musical artists. The house was the home of the legendary Leo Kellam Teel who was "a lifelong recording engineer." The "dingy little studio with the ceiling so low that all the cowboys had to remove their hats," occupied a narrow room in the small shotgun house. A



"wall of fame" ran the length of the recording room with layers of postcards, Polaroids, and Kodaks.

Besides recording other musicians, Leo was a singer, songwriter, and guitarist. He fronted a country-western group called Leo Teel and the Teel Billies, playing legendary local venues, including the Baghdad Club, Bridgeport Club, Top Rail, and the Red Jacket. He also owned and operated several night clubs, including the Tip Top Club. He

counted night club owner Jack Ruby among his many friends. He was already in the music business when "Elvis was still playing a cigar box in Tupelo" and, because of his lifelong work in the music business, was awarded the Gold Guitar Award. He is credited with helping to "pioneer a generation of independent musicians at his in-home studio in Grand Prairie."

His long list of recording clients (and friends) are headlined with names like Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Boxcar Willie, Elvis Presley, Glen Campbell and his sister Sandi Campbell Brink, Tanya Tucker, LeeAnn Rymes, Ray Price and the Dixie Chicks. Other musicians who recorded here were Bill Bailey, Dena Kaye, Billy Lynn Groom, Joe Hardin Brown and Frankie Lee Smith, to list just a few.

Leo Teel "left the bandstand for the final time" July 30, 2010, at the age of 86. According to his obituary, he was known to still conduct jam sessions for a new generation of artists late in life. The number of testimonials and memories shared indicate the amazing amount of music played, recorded and produced from that little house on Small Street. The "revered relic of country music" was laid to rest in High Cemetery in Canton, Texas.



Coming Events

August

21 — GPHO 50th Birthday Party / General Meeting — 6:30 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum



September

18 — North Texas Giving Day — All Day — Online

20 — Cruzin' the Prairie Car & Truck Show — 10:00 a.m. — 2:00 p.m. — City Hall

October

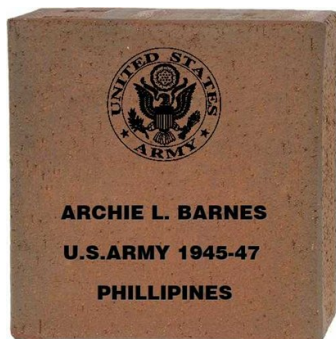
31 — HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

November

20 — GPHO General Meeting — 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum

FOLLOW THE RED BRICK PATH

The Grand Prairie Historical Museum and That's My Brick!® have joined forces to raise money for our newest project! GPHO is dedicated to preserving and sharing Grand Prairie's rich heritage. We are excited to offer an opportunity to be a permanent part of our history by creating a beautiful brick paver walkway that will allow you to advertise your business, show your civic pride, or honor a loved one. By purchasing a commemorative brick, you are supporting our mission. All proceeds will directly fund enhancements to our museum - expanding exhibit space, creating new and upgrading displays - all while providing a more engaging experience for visitors. To order a brick, visit thatsmybrick.com/GPHOTX or for more information contact James Barnes at (214) 458-1840.



8 X 8

\$200



4 X 8

\$100

FIRST GPHO MEETING

Wednesday, October 15, 1975 *GRAND PRAIRIE DAILY NEWS* Page 1

The newly formed Grand Prairie Historical Organization will hold its first meeting Saturday, Oct. 18 at 10 a.m. in the Trimble Room of the Grand Prairie Memorial Library.

The Grand Prairie Historical Organization is dedicated to preserving and passing on to future generations the history of Grand Prairie and the marking of appropriately recognized historical sites, such as the Watson Community Presbyterian Church building, the Goodwin Cabin, and several area cemeteries.

Mrs. Vernon Jackson, president and Mrs. Harry V. Taylor, president-elect, extend a most cordial invitation to all citizens of Grand Prairie to become

members of this new and worthwhile civic organization which meets only tri-annually.



Bobbie Taylor, First GPHO President-Elect

Daily News Photo

REFRESHING THE LIBERTY BELL

On Independence Day in 1976, a replica of the original Liberty Bell in Philadelphia was dedicated on the grounds of City Hall in Grand Prairie. The bell which was cast in France, was a Bicentennial project of the Texas Bluebonnet Chapter of the D.A.R. In an effort to involve every Grand Prairian, they sought donations from each school child and every adult who wished to participate. Smith and Warder Architects designed an overhang that matched City Hall and enhanced and protected the bell.



On July 4, 1981, this site received the Grand Prairie Significant Landmark #50 with Commission Chairman Ruthe Jackson presiding and the Honorable Mayor Weems accepting the marker formally. For nearly 50 years, the bell has served as a centerpiece for city events like Dechman Day (on January 2nd), Juneteenth celebrations, National Days of Prayer, and special dedications. The City is now in



Curtis and Jimmy Barrett ring the LIBERTY BELL at City Hall. Christopher Hendricks looks on.

the process of relocating the bell “just a few yards from its original location” to make way for new development, including an outdoor stage. The bell is undergoing a “refresh.” The extensive restoration project will include restoration of the wooden yoke that holds the bell in place, hardware, and bell components. A brand-new overhead shade structure will be constructed just south of City Hall, and the original donor plaques surrounding the bell will be prominently displayed.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

HOURS

Monday – Saturday: 1 – 4 p.m.

LOCATION

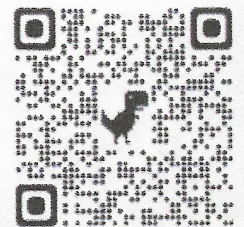
**1516 W. Main Street
Grand Prairie, TX 75050**

The Museum will be closed on major holidays (when the City of Grand Prairie closes).
If you would like a private tour of the museum, please email museum@gphotx.org or call (972) 639-3388

Two ways to access the GPHO Website!

QR Code for GPHO Website

~ Position the camera so the QR code is in frame.
When GPHOTX.org appears, tap it and you will be taken to the GPHO Website



Or simply click here gphotx.org

and go to the link!



WHILE YOU ARE CLEANING OUT DRAWERS, CLOSETS, GARAGE

Be on the lookout for items related to
Grand Prairie, past or current.

BUSINESS ADVERTISING "give aways"

- ❖ signs ❖ keychains ❖ pens ❖ pencils ❖ maps
- ❖ flashlights ❖ coin purses ❖ gift boxes ❖ photos
- ❖ receipt books ❖ menus ❖ matchbook covers ❖ ashtrays
- ❖ Models /photos of airplanes or helicopters
manufactured here ❖ phone books



Photos & Items related to your family history in Grand Prairie

- ❖ family reunions ❖ schools/events & sports ❖ report cards
- ❖ class photos ❖ parades ❖ church ❖ work ❖ civic groups
- ❖ photos of parks ❖ city leaders/events,
- ❖ other photos related to Grand Prairie

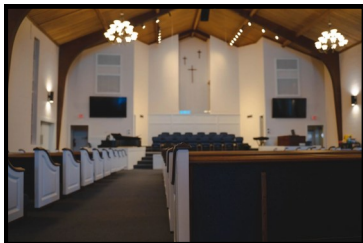
Please bring your items to the museum.

Don't miss the 2nd Annual Cruzin' the Prairie Car & Truck Show! Enter your special car or just come admire the variety of vehicles entered! Contact Kay Dunbar (kaydunbar@gphotx.org) with questions.

NEWLY-AWARDED GRAND PRAIRIE SIGNIFICANT LANDMARKS

The GPHO board recently approved the awarding of two Grand Prairie Significant Landmarks.

NO. 73 — DAVE'S HI-WAY WRECKER: Located at 1509 E. Main, Dave's Hi-Way Wrecker is one of Grand Prairie's oldest, continually-operating businesses. David Joyner established his wrecker service in 1957. His first wrecker was a Cadillac that he made into a tow truck by welding a winch onto it. The business continues to operate as a second-generation family business under the leadership of Dave's son, Greg Joyner.



NO. 74 — INDIAN HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH: The Indian Hills Baptist Church, at 814 Tamara Lane, was established in 1953 as a mission church in the new housing addition in Grand Prairie named Indian Hills. The first congregation consisted of Mr. & Mrs. Hartwell, Fernie & Thelma Pyle, two young people from the Baptist General Convention of Texas and five neighborhood children. The church service was held in a tent across the street from the current church buildings.

Kay Dunbar, a member of the GPHO Significant Landmark Committee, worked with the individuals of these two establishments to research and document their histories.

GRAND PRAIRIE HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION
1516 W. MAIN ST.
GRAND PRAIRIE, TX 75050

Mission Statement

The mission of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization (GPHO) is to preserve and share the history of Grand Prairie, Texas, by researching, collecting, properly preserving, and archiving items that tell the history of Grand Prairie and its citizens. The Organization will share the history with others through avenues throughout the city by committed volunteers who will provide a standard of excellence in support of the organization.

Help the Grand Prairie Historical Organization preserve the PAST by joining for the FUTURE.

