



Newsletter

May 2026

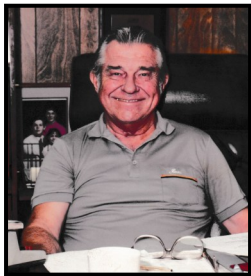
May 21, 2026 — GPHO General Meeting

6:30 p.m. at the Grand Prairie Historical Museum

Walt's Appliance

By Robert Minter

Robert Minter, the former owner of Walts Appliance will share stories about growing up in Walt's Appliance. Robert is the son of Walter and Gracie (Austin) Minter who established first, Walt's Furniture Store and later, Walt's Appliance, in Grand Prairie in the late 1950s. Walt's Appliance soon became an important addition to Grand Prairie with Grand Prairians relying on Walt for new and used appliances and expert repair services. Gracie was in charge of the finances of the



Walt Minter

business. Walt and Gracie got married on December 7, 1941, the day Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Walt enlisted, serving over 10 years in World War II and the Korean War. Robert was born in 1943, while his dad was away at war. Five years later, a sister, Shirley Jean joined the family. After Walt's discharge from the Air Force, the Minters settled in Arlington, later relocating to Grand Prairie. After Walt's death in 1989, Robert took over the operation of Walt's Appliance, continuing the great service Walt's has always been known for. Earlier this year, Robert closed the business after 68 years of service. Robert donated several items from the store to GPHO, including a 1935 Maytag washer and a wringer, which are now part of the Museum collection.. A few additional items are temporarily in storage. Robert is known for his great sense of humor, so we expect he will keep his audience smiling or laughing out loud!



1935 Maytag Washer

NO MEAL WILL BE SERVED AT THIS MEETING, SO RESERVATIONS ARE NOT NEEDED

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Warm regards,

NEEDED – WE NEED YOU! ☐☐VOLUNTEERS What is a Volunteer?

According to Webster, a volunteer is *“a person who willingly undertakes a service.”* At the Grand Prairie Historical Organization & Museum, a volunteer is so much more—you are the heartbeat of everything we do. As our museum continues to grow, we are expecting increased visitors this June and July with teams, families, and fans traveling through the area during the FIFA World Cup season. We want every visitor to feel welcomed, engaged, and inspired—and we cannot do it without YOU.



☐ Volunteer Opportunities

Just 1 day a week or 2 days a month (1–4 PM) can make a huge difference:

• Docents (Greeters & Guides)

Welcome guests, answer questions, and share the stories behind our exhibits.

☐ *Also needed: 6 volunteers for our Copeland Home Tours (June & December).*

• Digitization Team

Help preserve history by converting documents into digital files.

• Front Desk Support

Answer phones and assist visitors.

• Collections Intake

Accept donated items, complete forms, and help preserve community history.

☐ Why Volunteer?

- Meet new people
- Be part of something meaningful
- Help preserve Grand Prairie's history
- Work alongside a fun and passionate team

☐ What We Need Most

We strive to have at least TWO volunteers per day—and with the summer rush coming, filling those spots is critical.

☐♀ Join Us Today!

We truly need your help as we welcome visitors from near and far. Can we count on YOU?

☐ Contact:

Kay Dunbar – kay.dunbar@gphotx.org

James Barnes – james.barnes@gphotx.org

Sign up today – I promise, you'll have an awesome time!

Kay Dunbar

2025-2026 GPHO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kay Dunbar, President president@gphotx.org

Michael Sabat, Vice President vicepresident@gphotx.org

Jonathan Stegmann, Secretary secretary@gphotx.org

Larry Barnes, Treasurer treasurer@gphotx.org

Jan Barrett, Education/Events Director events@gphotx.org

James Barnes, Museum Director museum@gphotx.org

Mike Hutchins, Technology Director technology@gphotx.org

Rebecca Stegmann, Program Director

Gary Dunbar, Building Manager

2025-2026 GPHO COMMITTEE CHAIRS

, Membership membership@gphotx.org

Kathy Ritterhouse, Newsletter newsletter@gphotx.org

Rebecca Stegmann, Fundraising

Kathy Ritterhouse, Significant Landmarks

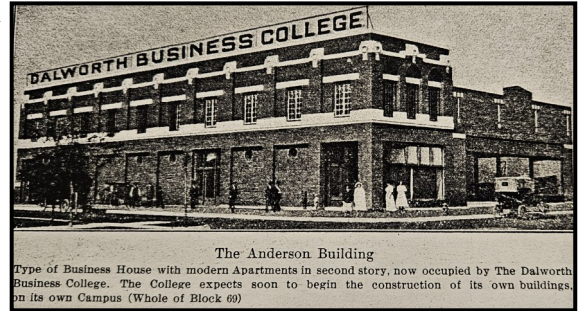
Mike Hutchins, Technology

Larry Barnes, Financial Review

RAINBOW GARDENS

Lots for the pre-planned model "utopia" town of Dalworth Park went on sale September 15, 1910, ranging from \$450 to \$1,200 for lots north of the railway. The town grew quickly and, within three years, included a "Motor Inn, broom and mop factory, and a business college."

The Anderson Building was one of the original buildings and was considered one of Dalworth Park's "showpieces." Originally, the Anderson Building was the home of the Dalworth Business College which occupied the ground floor. The second story housed "modern Apartments." A few blocks away (at the corner of Dalworth Street and N.W. 14th), the first high-class "Automobile Inn" in Texas was built and named "The Dalworth Inn."



The Anderson Building
Type of Business House with modern Apartments in second story, now occupied by The Dalworth Business College. The College expects soon to begin the construction of its own buildings, on its own Campus (Whole of Block 69)

Rainbow Gardens Being Improved for Summer

Texas lodge dining hall, on the Fort Worth pike one mile west of Grand Prairie, will be called Rainbow Gardens and will cater to those who desire first-class food and clean entertainment, the new owners, Jimmie Martin and C. D. Newland of Oak Cliff, said on Wednesday. The dining-rooms of the lodge, situated in the center of a five-acre park, as well as the tearoom and the grill, will be available for private parties. Music for the dancing will be furnished by Alice Fronk Wood's eight-piece orchestra.

A program of beautification of the grounds and improvement of the buildings and equipment is being started by the new owners. A large electrical fountain with a rainbow effect will be installed.

According to an article in the *Dallas Morning News*, two men from Oak Cliff, Jimmie Martin and C.D. Newland, opened a Texas lodge dining hall one mile west of Grand Prairie in the summer of 1927 and called it Rainbow Gardens. The Dalworth Business College had either followed through on their plan to build a campus in Dalworth Park or moved elsewhere, freeing space in the Anderson Building for the dining hall. Rainbow Gardens was designed to "cater to those who desire first-class food and clean entertainment."

Typical supper club menus included prime rib, steaks, chicken and fish. Besides dining rooms, the lodge provided a tearoom and a grill, all available for private parties. Dancing was an important ingredient to its success. Music for the dancing was furnished by Alice Fronk Wood's eight-piece orchestra. (Alice Fronk Wood was a saxophonist who also played in Babe Lowry's "Rhythm Sweethearts," an all-female orchestra from Dallas.)

In the 1980s, Ruthe Jackson tracked down several longtime Grand Prairians who remembered the Rainbow Gardens. It

was remembered as "a very exclusive dance hall." Elizabeth McIlhenny Webb was quoted in an article about the Anderson Building saying, "There was also a nightclub, which ran for some time." On Ruthe's cable show "It Happened in Grand Prairie" in 1986, Lola Mae Swadley, a teacher at Grand Prairie High School and the senior class sponsor for the Class of 1932, arranged for the Junior/Senior banquet to be held at Rainbow Gardens. Laughing, she told Ruthe that at the time, she never thought about it being wrong to hold the banquet in a nightclub and to let the students dance.



Lola Mae Swadley

I'm not sure when the Dalworth Rainbow Gardens closed but a Rainbow Gardens nightclub opened in Dallas on Upper Elm in June of 1936. During Prohibition, many (most?) similar supper clubs operated more like speakeasies, which may explain the "very exclusive" description. Unfortunately, as far as I can tell, so far, no photographs of Rainbow Gardens have surfaced.

HAPPY 117TH BIRTHDAY TO G.P.

GPHO found a unique way to celebrate the 117th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Grand Prairie on Saturday, May 14th at the Grand Prairie Historical Museum. GPHO members volunteered to share their memories of growing up and living in Grand Prairie during the different decades from the 1940s to the 1990s.

The speakers and the decades they reminisced about were:

- 1940s – Gerald Buchanan
- 1950s – Charles Allumbaugh
- 1960s & 1970s – Kay Dunbar
- 1980s – Bill Moser
- 1990s – Jenna Pecor

Each speaker had a very different upbringing and view of how the world was beginning to change. Yet, all shared great stories and kept the audience informed, intrigued, interested, surprised and laughing about their memories for the different decades.

A special thanks to each volunteer speaker and all who participated in the Grand Prairie birthday celebration!



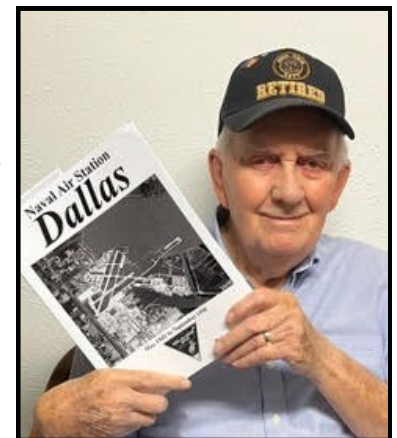
L to R: Bill Moser, Charles Allumbaugh, Gerald Buchanan, Jenna Pecor and Kay Dunbar

Member News

GPHO member, **WALTER R. WAGENER**, has written a history/documentary book titled *Naval Air Station Dallas*. The book covers the history of the Dallas Naval Air Station, from its commissioning on May 15, 1941, and the anticipation of building a Navy aviation training site, to the lowering of its command flag on September 26, 1998 -- then the move west to become Naval Air Station, Fort Worth. Originally, Dallas' station would train pilots destined for combat throughout the world during World War II and after became a site to maintain flying skills of these pilots in the Naval Reserve program.

Walter retired from the Navy after 23 years of service as a journalist/public affairs specialist whose interest in military history led him to write the book.

Naval Air Station Dallas can be purchased online through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.com and Walmart.com.



A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Thirty-three years ago, the Grand Prairie Historical Organization President was Jan Barrett. Jan is still active in GPHO, currently serving as Education/Events Director, as well as a museum volunteer and as a member of the Significant Landmark Committee. Her deep knowledge of Grand Prairie history and her longtime participation in GPHO are treasured and appreciated. Below and on the following page is her May 1993 newsletter



NEWSLETTER-MAY 15, 1993

The Grand Prairie Historical Organization will hold its annual business meeting and installation of officers, May 20th at noon, at the Soroptimist House. The organization will provide the meat, tea and coffee--you bring yourself and your favorite dish and join us for this important meeting.

Those of you that missed the February meeting, really missed an exciting program. Billy Powers presented a slide show using pictures of early Grand Prairie. We saw around 150 of the 200 slides that he had. Billy was kind enough to have duplicates made for the organization's archives. The organization paid for the slides but Billy did all the leg work and got archival quality slides at a reasonable price. Be sure and say "thanks" the next time you see him.

History Appreciation Day was again a success. We had a number of people to tour the Copeland Home and the Bowles Home. Many of these people had lived here most of their life and this was the first time they had toured the homes. Both homes are getting more and more exposure. That is a good sign!

Jo Campbell served as a hostess and docent for the Oak Cliff Garden Club Forum that toured the Copeland Home recently. There were approximately 30 ladies in attendance. Thanks Jo!

J.C. Swadley has had knee surgery and is reported doing great!

Irene Paxton has been under the weather lately. She was recovering from three broken toes when she took a hard fall that left her bruised and sore. She is beginning to feel a little better and hopes to be up and about soon.

We want to wish these two special people a speedy recovery!

A BLAST FROM THE PAST, cont.

On April 18, the Historical Commission held a dedication ceremony and presented the Estes Cemetery with a Grand Prairie Significant Landmark Marker. It was a very nice ceremony with over 70 people in attendance.

Last month, Faye Chism and I attended the Texas Preservation Conference in Austin. One of the seminars that we attended was, HOW TO DEVELOP AN EXHIBIT FOR THE SMALL MUSEUM. Well, you all know that we do not have a small museum so we improvised. The Historical Commission is using the window of a vacant building for a display of historical items. The display will be changed every other month or so. It is called THE GRAND PRAIRIE STORE FRONT MUSEUM and is located at 124 East Main St. There is a sign in the window, so you can't miss it. Be sure to go by and see it and let us know what you think about it.

The Commission is on the look-out for photographs depicting those early years in Grand Prairie for future displays. If you would like to help us out contact Faye Chism. NOTE: All displays are photo copies. We are not using any original photographs or documents. This is for your protection.

The following items have been added to our growing inventory.

Daisey Long-2 oil lamps & a stuffed cat
Pat Florence-2 ink wells
Irene Paxton-cut glass punch bowl & serving tray
and a brass plant stand
Snapp Family-cast iron dutch oven
Maxine Robertson-small step ladder

The Historical Organization is looking for a good copy machine and a personal computer (IBM compatible). Our inventory is steadily growing and this would simplify keeping records of all of our acquisitions. If any of you know of anyone that would like to donate these items for a tax write-off, please contact Faye Chism or Ruthe Jackson.

This will be my last newsletter as your president so I would like to thank each and everyone of you for all the support and encouragement that you have given me these past four years. I did not accomplish all that I wanted to, but I do feel we made some contribution to historic preservation in our city. "THANKS" for all the help.

ITS TIME TO PAY DUES

REMEMBER THOSE OLD PHOTOGRAPHS--WITHOUT YOUR HELP, OUR STORE FRONT MUSEUM CAN'T SURVIVE!

DON'T FORGET THE MEETING THURSDAY!



You can tell from Jan's newsletter that the Grand Prairie Historical Organization has been hard at work preserving Grand Prairie history and educating residents and visitors about it for many years!

DO YOU KNOW???

Do YOU know . . . How Many UFO Sightings Have Been Reported in Grand Prairie?

The April 2026 flight of the manned Artemis II spacecraft, around the moon and back, has stirred up a renewed interest in our universe and possible inhabitants beyond our solar system. According to the records of the National UFO Reporting Center (UFORC), at least 24 sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects have occurred in Grand Prairie. The UFORC was founded in 1974 by the noted UFO investigator Robert J. Gribble for the purpose of receiving, recording, and, to the greatest degree possible, corroborating and documenting reports from individuals who have been witness to unusual, possibly UFO-related, events.



The earliest documented occurrence in Grand Prairie took place on Mountain Creek Lake and involved a “fast moving silent craft over water.” Around 9:30 p.m. on July 1, 1966, three Grand Prairians who had been sailing their small sailboat on Mountain Creek Lake, became stranded when the wind died down to nothing. Watching for speedboats that might not see them in the dark, they noticed a “rather tall yacht” coming toward them at a fairly fast speed (estimated at 30 mph) above the water. It was “eerily silent with no sound of a motor” and just barely missed them, passing within 40 feet of their boat. Weirdly, although they were gripping the sides of the boat prepared for high waves from its wake to tip them over, “no waves ever came” to hit their boat.

Another early sighting happened at the Century 4 Drive-In. The Century Drive-In opened June 13, 1970, on the same site that the Downs Drive-In originally stood. Each of the four screens had a capacity for 500 cars. At the time it was the first four-screen theater and was dubbed “the world’s largest drive-in.” On May 7, 1978, the drive-in was at about 50% capacity, when the movie-goers noticed another show. They started flashing their headlights and



honking their horns and getting out of their cars. The “show” they were watching was the appearance of a UFO described as “a triangular ship that made no sound, the size as big as a football field” with lights beneath it in a variety of colors. When it left it “went from a stand still hover to the size of a star in a matter of three seconds.”

According to a Facebook post in 2022, two of Grand Prairie’s water towers were often mistaken for UFOs back in the 1970s. One was located around Highway 360 and Jefferson; the other was near Highway 360 and Mayfield Road. In the dark, with its rounded spaceship-like top and revolving red lights, it was easy to imagine it was a UFO. One woman reported, “My great-grandparents came to visit. My great-grandma was scared to death of it! She swore up and down it was a UFO! She never came back for a visit.”



Coming Events

May

- 21 – GPHO General Meeting – 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. – Grand Prairie Historical Museum
- 25 – **MEMORIAL DAY** – Museum Closed



June

- TBD – Flag Retirement Ceremony – Time and Date not yet set – Grand Prairie Historical Museum
- 20 – Copeland House Tour – 10:00 a.m. -- 1:00 p.m. – Copeland House, 125 SW Dallas St.

July

- 4 – **INDEPENDENCE DAY** – Museum Closed.
- 4 – America250 – 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – Epic Central Park
- 25 – Scoops of Summer – 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Grand Prairie Historical Museum

August

- 20 – GPHO General Meeting – 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. – Grand Prairie Historical Museum

UPDATE ON “WALKING THROUGH HISTORY” PROJECT

Thank you to all our friends who have ordered bricks for our fundraiser. The first phase of bricks have been installed in a beautiful walkway on the north side of the Grand Prairie Historical Museum. The memorial bricks are framed by historic bricks “rescued” by Ruthe Jackson from the demolition of the Spikes Brothers Broom Factory (which was located about two blocks east of the Museum). The brick pathway runs in front of a new split-rail fence with a beautiful garden of native



plants. (Thanks go out to Gary Dunbar and our intern Steliyan Nedelchev for planting the garden.)



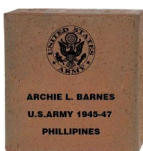
It’s not too late to participate in the Commemorative Brick



Walkway Project which raises funds to support the Grand Prairie Historical Museum. By purchasing a personalized commemorative brick, you can showcase your civic pride, honor a loved one, or celebrate a special memory. Since GPHO is a nonprofit organization,



every brick purchased helps us preserve the past and inspire future generations. Bricks are available in two sizes, as shown to the left. Pick up a brochure that describes the entire project at the museum. **Contact James Barnes at 214-458-1840** if you have any questions.

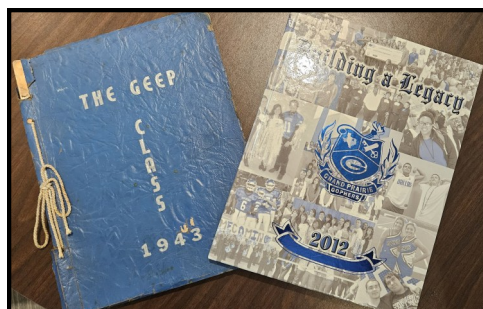


8 X 8 \$200

4 X \$100

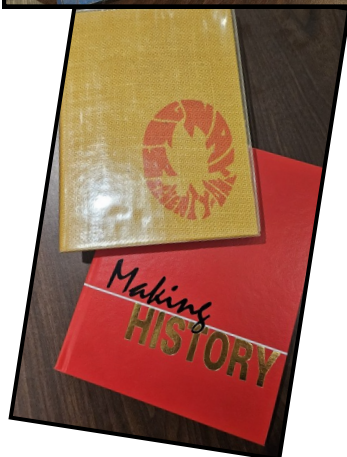
FOUND IN THE MUSEUM

The Grand Prairie Historical Museum has a great collection of yearbooks from Grand Prairie High School and from South Grand Prairie High School! Until recently, they have been in the Archives Room, so you may not have known about them. You can now find them on a bookshelf by the school memorabilia display cases and the letter jackets.



The earliest GPHS yearbook in the Museum collection is from 1943 and the latest GPHS yearbook is from 2012. For South Grand Prairie High School, the collection includes yearbooks from 1971 up to 2021.

The Museum does not have a complete collection for either school. Several years are missing, but the museum volunteers are always on the lookout for yearbooks to complete the collection. If you have yearbooks you would consider donating, check with the museum volunteers to see if the collection is missing your year.

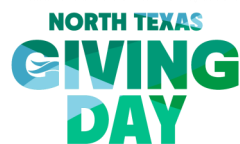


The Museum also does have a small collection of some middle school and even grade school yearbooks. Middle schools included are: Adams, Arnold, Jefferson, Kennedy, Lee, Reagan, and Truman. These yearbooks are still housed in the Archives Room so just ask the Museum volunteers to help you if you'd like to browse through any of them.

The yearbook collection is one of the museum's most used resources.

Visitors enjoy looking up friends and family in past yearbooks. One young man was excited to find pictures to embarrass his aunts and parents! So, stop in and browse through the collection!

NORTH TEXAS GIVING DAY



North Texas Giving Day is one of our most important opportunities to raise funds for the future of our museum, and we are asking each of you to consider making a donation – no matter the size.

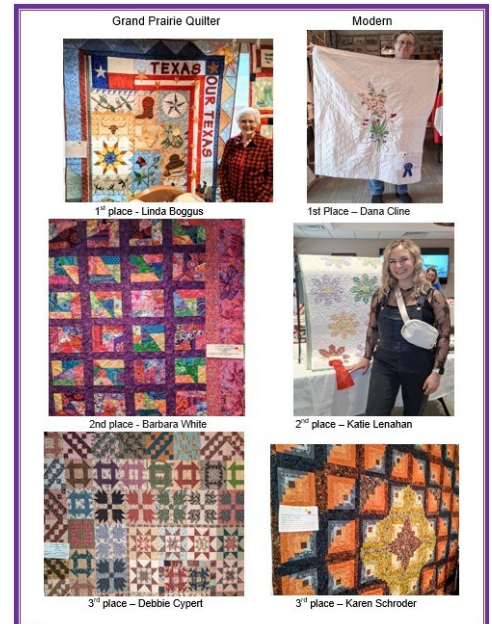
This year, our wish list includes two exciting and meaningful projects:

- **Grand Prairie State Bank Hamilton Brothers Robbery Exhibit** – an interactive experience bringing this historic story to life (approx. \$8,000)
- **Rebuilding the Goodwin Cabin** – a treasured piece of early Grand Prairie history, restored and placed beside our museum (approx. \$100,000–\$120,000)

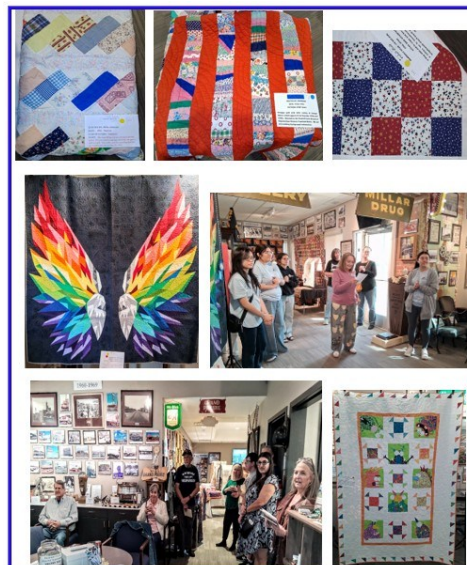
These are big goals – but so is our belief in this organization and in each of you. Every dollar truly makes a difference. Together, we can create something lasting for our community. Just imagine the day when you walk up to the museum and see the Goodwin Cabin standing proudly once again – because you helped make it happen.

You can donate anytime at: <https://www.northtexasgivingday.org/organization/Gphotx>.

A TAPESTRY OF TALES QUILT SHOW



Postponed twice due to weather, the 2026 GPHO Quilt Show was finally successfully held on Saturday, February 7th. About 50 or so beautiful quilts were entered and displayed. As you can see, there was a wide variety of colorful and interesting quilts. Thanks to all who entered and attended.



2026 Feb 7 GPHO Quilt Show

Categories & Winners

+++++

Best of Show
Kyla Schooling

+++++

GP Quilter
1st Linda Boggus
2nd Barbara White
3rd Deborah Cypert

+++++

Antique
1st Becky Ritterhouse
2nd Stephanie Morena
3rd Becky Ritterhouse

+++++

Modern
1st Dana Cline
2nd Katie Lenahan
3rd Sharon Schroeder

+++++

You Make Me Smile
Marjorie Martin

+++++

Honorable Mention
Sharon Schroder – Teddy Bears
Sharon Schroder – Monsters

MUSEUM INFORMATION

HOURS

Monday – Saturday: 1 – 4 p.m.

LOCATION

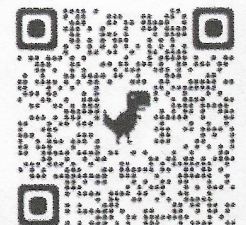
1516 W. Main Street
Grand Prairie, TX 75050

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

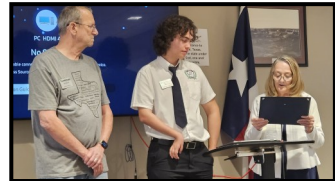
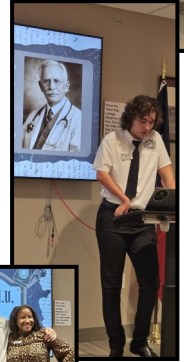
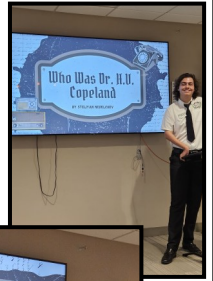


Or simply click here gphotx.org

and go to the link!

FAREWELL TO INTERN STELIYAN NEDELICHEV

STELIYAN NEDELICHEV has been our student intern from Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute (GPCI) since last fall when he began working shifts at the museum on Mondays and Wednesdays. Born in Bulgaria, Steliyan moved to Texas when he was six years old for specialized healthcare. He grew up in Grand Prairie, attending Powell Elementary, Reagan Middle School, and GPCI high school. Steliyan was an excellent intern. He quickly learned the museum displays and the Grand Prairie history stories they told. He also was always willing to help put up displays, carry boxes, and even plant the cactus and other plants in the new garden. Steliyan's last day was April 23rd. That afternoon, he presented his research project to GPHO members, his friends and family, and faculty from GPCI. His interesting and entertaining program was titled "Who Was Dr. H.V. Copeland." Following the program, GPHO President Dunbar awarded Steliyan a scholarship toward his future collegiate career at Baylor University where he will study Biomedicine. We all appreciate the time and energy Steliyan has given to our organization and wish him a fantastic future!

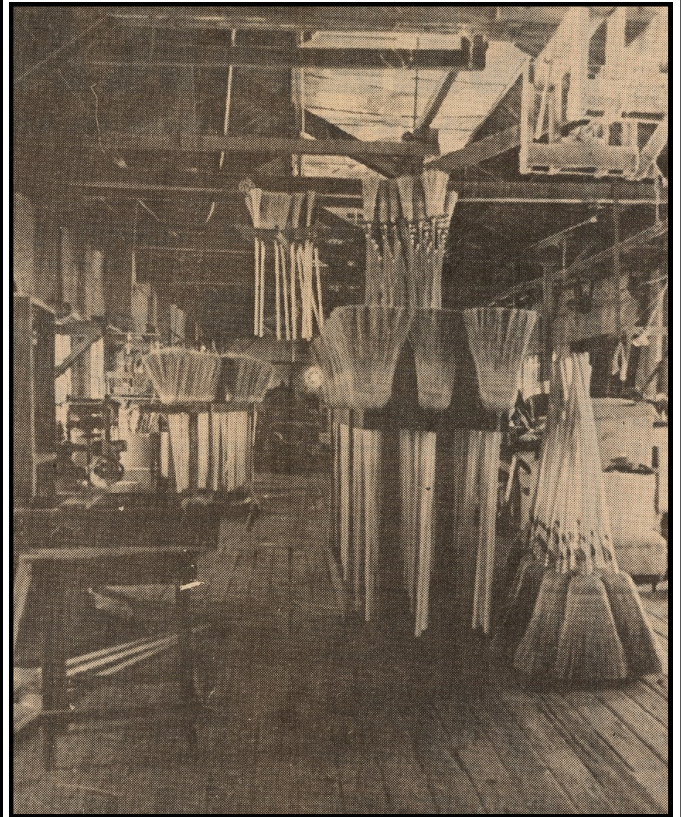


welcome

New Members

Steve Compton

Alyxandra Connell



Spikes Brother Broom Factory
Dalworth Park, Texas

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.

