GRAND PRAIRIE HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION

Newsletter

November 2026

November 19, 2026 —— GPHO General Meeting

11:30 a.m. at the Grand Prairie Historical Museum

THE MOTLEY CREW

LYNN MOTLEY SHARES MOTLEY FAMILY HISTORY

Recently, our November speaker, Lynn Lawrence Motley, donated a beautifully framed photo of the Robert Page Motley family to our Grand Prairie Historical Museum. Thirty-six members representing four generations of the family posed on the front porch of the easily recognizable Motley home located at the corner of SW 3rd and Motley Street. A helpful key identifies each person and includes the age of the person when the photo was taken in 1921.



Person's in Photograph by Number, Name and Age

01. Mildred Motley, age 5
02. Joe Bailey Motley, age 2
03. Milford Motley, age 5
*04. Emma (Lawrence) Motley, age 63
*05. Robert Page Motley, age 71
06. Lynn Lester Motley, age 2
*07. Lynn Motley, age 33
*08. Edward Motley, age 3
*09. Robert Lee Motley, age 28
10. Emmett Candler, age 11
*11. Gene Motley, age 12
*12. Tom Hall, age 53
13. Odelene Candler, age 7
14. Aileen Motley, age 9
*15. Mary Lotus Motley, age 5
16. Annie (Motley) Candler, age 38
17. John Candler, age 43
*18. John S. Motley, age 44
*19. Myrtel (Motley) Hall, age 41
20. Laura (Payne) Keith, age 26?
*21. Lillie (Motley) Payne, age 42
22. Jewel Candler, age 9
23. John L. Candler, age 5
24. Robert Hall
25. Edward Hall, age 6
*26. Bertha (Vurgoom) Motley, age 28
27. Jack Motley, age 1
*28. Doris Hall
29. Ressie Motley, age 14
30. Fay Motley, age 16
*31. Eliza (Nash) Motley, age 44
*32. Helen (Wyatt) Motley, age 24
33. Emma Motley, age 20
*34. Lonnie Payne, age 16
*35. Ray Payne, age 18
36. Charlie Motley, age 18

* Buried at Southland Cemetary

Join us on Thursday, November 19th, when Lynn Motley shares stories of various members of this important Grand Prairie pioneer family. There are many interesting characters and tales included in this amazing photograph!

Find more about the Motley family on page 4.

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

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Dear GPHO Members,

I am blessed and grateful to begin my newly elected second term as President on October 1st. Thank you for your trust, encouragement, and continued support of our museum. As we begin the 2026–2027 term, I am excited about the possibilities ahead! One of my greatest hopes is to welcome more visitors through our doors. Please stop by to see our new exhibits and bring your family and friends. While you are here, meet our new interns, Melissa Duphorne and Juan Trujillo, seniors from Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute (GPCI). We have new ideas for sharing Grand Prairie's history, and we need your help to bring them to life:

- Suggest a speaker. We are looking for speakers for our May and August general meetings. If you have a story to share or know someone who would give an interesting presentation, please let us know.
- Share your memories. We would love to have you visit during the day so we can interview you and record your stories of Grand Prairie. Your memories of schools, businesses, neighborhoods, and everyday life help preserve the history that photographs alone cannot tell.
- Help us reach new audiences. We plan to share short videos of our speakers and museum stories on TikTok to spark interest in our community's history.
- Think of the museum before discarding family treasures. Photographs, documents, and items connected to Grand Prairie may help tell an important story. Please contact James.Barnes@gphotx.org first to ask whether they would be a good fit for our collection.
- Volunteer your time and talents. Whether you can help regularly or give a few hours at an event, your participation makes a difference. We especially need helping hands for these three upcoming events:

November 11 — Flag Retirement Ceremony: Join us to honor our veterans and our flag as we support the Boy Scouts who conduct the flag retirement ceremony.

December 5 — Copeland Christmas Tour: We need docents from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to welcome visitors and share the history of the Dr. H. V. Copeland Home. I would love to make this tour especially festive and memorable before restoration begins.

January 23 — Quilt Show: Please enter your quilts! They can be antique quilts you've inherited, quilts you've been given, or quilts you made yesterday. We welcome quilts of all vintages, colors, and condition! Also, please spread the word! Let your family and friends know about the show, encourage them to enter their quilts, and invite them to drop by on Saturday, January 23rd to view the beautiful array of quilts. We always need help on Friday, the day before the show. This is when people drop off their quilts. We need help checking them in and arranging them for display.

If you can help with an event, suggest a speaker, or share your memories, please email me at Kay.Dunbar@gphotx.org. Let me know which opportunity interests you and when you are available. I love this museum and the stories it holds, but it is the people who bring those stories to life. I look forward to working alongside you as we help GPHO grow, welcome new visitors, and preserve more of Grand Prairie's history. Come join us—we will have a wonderful time together!

Warmly,

Kay Dunbar,

President, Grand Prairie Historical Organization & Museum

Copeland Home Restoration & Christmas Tour



We have exciting news! The city has informed GPHO that the Dr. H. V. Copeland Home will receive an exterior and interior restoration, with work expected to begin as early as January or February 2027. This project will help preserve this treasured home and its history for generations to come.

The restoration will require us to pause tours for a while. Before that work begins, our Christmas Tour on December 5th will give us a wonderful opportunity to welcome visitors and celebrate the home's history and holiday charm.

I would love to make this year's Christmas Tour especially memorable! If you enjoy decorating, welcoming guests, sharing history, or helping behind the scenes, we would be grateful for your ideas and helping hands. Together, we can create a warm, festive experience for everyone who visits. Immediately after the tour, we will begin carefully packing the fragile items in the house to protect them during restoration. I know this is during the Christmas holiday and if need be, we will start packing in early January. We need members who can help handle and pack these treasured pieces with care.

If you would like to help with the Christmas Tour, packing, or both, please email me at Kay.Dunbar@gphotx.org and let me know how you would like to participate.

The planned restoration includes:

Exterior work

- Installing a French drain system connected to new gutters and downspouts.
- Leveling the house and addressing unevenness in the foundation.
- Replacing deteriorated wood while preserving the home's historic appearance and structural integrity.
- Installing new trim around all windows for a secure, weatherproof fit.
- Replacing porch planks and ensuring the porch is stable while maintaining its historic appearance.
- Repairing entrance gates and installing secure locks to protect the property.

Interior work

- Repairing drywall cracks.
- Painting walls and ceilings to match existing colors.
- Re-staining interior woodwork to restore its original appearance.
- Ensuring the sink, toilet, and bathtub have proper drainage and water flow.
- Upgrading wiring, outlets, and electrical panels as needed to meet code requirements.
- Installing interior and exterior security cameras.
- Adding Wi-Fi and internet to support security and daily use.

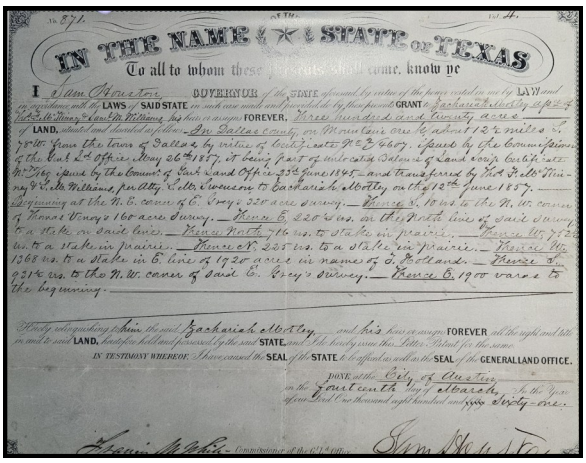


This is an exciting new chapter for the Copeland Home. Your help will make a difference as we celebrate its history this Christmas and prepare it for the care it deserves.

Thank you for being part of preserving Grand Prairie's history!

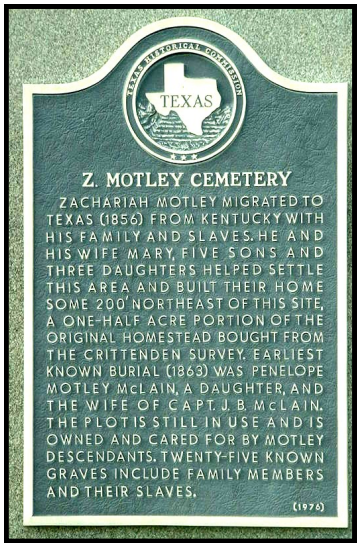
MOTLEY FAMILY

The Motley family/Grand Prairie connection began back in 1857 when (Thomas) Zachariah Motley purchased 320 acres of land west of Dallas. This was before the founding of Dechman (on January 2, 1863) and long before the town of Grand Prairie was incorporated in 1909, but the land lies in the heart of present-day Grand Prairie.

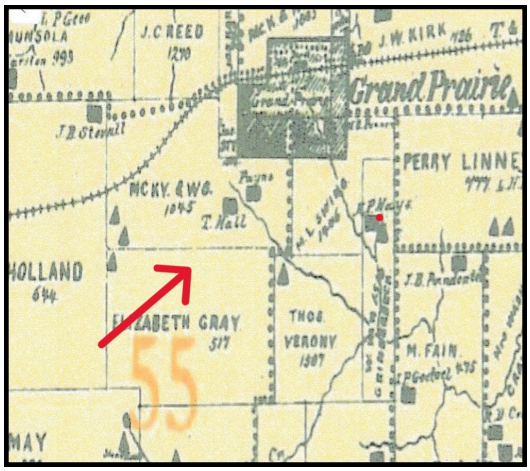

IN THE NAME & STATE OF TEXAS

To all to whom these Presents Shall come, know ye

Zachariah migrated to Texas from Kentucky in 1856 with his family and slaves. He and his wife, Mary LYNN (which explains the recurrence of the name "Lynn" in the various generations of the Motley family) along with their five sons and three daughters settled east of Dallas on land that became northern Mesquite. Zachariah and Mary, their three daughters and four of their sons remained in the Mesquite area. All of them are buried in the Motley Cemetery which is on land that was owned by Zachariah.



Their son Robert Page (R.P.) Motley settled on the 320 acres in western Dallas County after marrying Emma Sarah Lawrence in 1876. To this marriage were born four girls and four boys. About 1900, he had houses built for his two eldest daughters, Mary Lillie Motley Payne (married to Alonzo Harden Payne) and Myrtle L. Motley Hall (married to Thomas Hubert Hall). The location of these houses are marked on the 1900 Dallas County Street map with the arrow pointing them out. The Payne house was moved in 1946 to 117 Motley Street. It still stands today with the Grand Prairie Significant Landmark #19. In 1910, he built the house that's located on the corner of SW 3rd and Motley Street. Although Thomas Hall is credited with donating land for Old Southland Cemetery, the land was actually the portion of Zachariah's 320 acre purchase that was given to Myrtle. R.P. and Emma, along with several of their children and grandchildren are buried in Old Southland Cemetery.

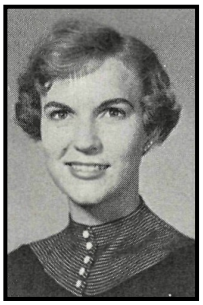




A VISIT FROM NELL LANGFORD



We love when former Grand Prairians come back for a visit and drop into the Grand Prairie Historical Museum! Recently, Nell Langford dropped by. Nell grew up in Grand Prairie, but left in 1956 when she was 16 years old. She eventually settled in Pismo Beach, California, where she currently lives. She had not been back to Grand Prairie until October 21st when she had a layover at DFW on her way to Paris (France)! James and Larry Barnes showed her around the museum and then took her to her old homestead on the corner of NE 29th and Bowles Street.



Nellie Earline was born in Grand Prairie in 1940 to Caleb Earl Langford and his wife Rochelle Lummus. Her parents had settled in Grand Prairie in 1935 where they built and operated Langford Waterworks while they raised their eight children. By the mid-1950s, the Langford Waterworks served over 400 customers over "many miles from NE 33rd St. on the East to Bagdad Road on the West, from Gifford Street on the North to the Navy Base on the South."

Nell (seen in her 1956 GEEP yearbook photo to the left) went on to earn a doctorate degree in Experimental Psychology from University of Nevada-Reno. She eventually settled in Pismo Beach, and in 2000, she was a professor at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California. It was a joy to welcome Nell back home to Grand Prairie and learn a little about her family and her successes in her life.

Thanks to James and Larry Barnes for going beyond the duty of a museum docent and for providing research for this article.

Remembering Joe Eddlemon

Joe Eddlemon passed away on August 4, 2026, at the age of 78. Although he was born in Corpus Christi, he spent nearly his whole life in Grand Prairie, most of it working at Eddlemon's Food Shop first and then at Eddlemon Brothers which he operated with GPHO life member Johnny Eddlemon. Outside of work, Joe was a passionate collector of nostalgic Coca Cola bottles, antique milk bottles, coins, and sports memorabilia. He was a devoted fan and longtime season ticket holder for the Texas Rangers. He was also a devoted grandfather to his three grandchildren. Besides his grandchildren, he is survived by his daughter, Elizabeth Eddlemon-Eureste, his two brothers, David and Johnny, and their families. He loved his Grand Prairie community and was well-loved by his family, friends and lovers of Eddlemon's barbecue throughout the community.





MAIN STREET FESTIVAL

We had a great time at Main Street Fest on October 24th. We enjoyed meeting so many families. This was a great opportunity to get our Museum out there.



Kay and Gary Dunbar along with James and Larry Barnes staffed our booth throughout the festival. Special thanks go out to the SGP Rho Kappa students, Addison, Darrin, and Sofia for working so hard packing and helping tote the stuff to the curb. And we can't forget our VP, Michael Sabat who also helped pack up and tear down the booth..





January 23 – GPHO Annual Quilt Show
"Quilted Treasures on the Prairie"
Saturday, January 23, 2027 | 10 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Museum
No entry fee!

Let's start the new year with creativity and beautiful quilts! This year, we're excited to add two new People's Choice Award categories to our annual quilt show: **Small/Lap or Wall** and **Youth, ages 12–18**. Our returning categories are:

- **GP Quilter**
- **Antique/Vintage:** pre-1950
- **Modern:** 1950–present

Quilt drop-off: Friday, January 22, 2027, from **1–7 p.m. at the museum**. Entry forms will be sent out in early December.

Quilts can be of any vintage, type, or condition. So, gather your antique, new or well-loved quilts and bring them to the museum on January 22nd to show off and share with the community. You will be able to pick them up immediately following the presentation of the People's Choice awards. Please invite your family and friends, share our flyers, and help us make these events special. We look forward to seeing you!



DO YOU KNOW???

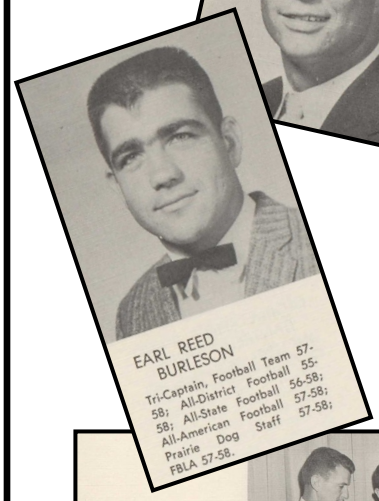
Do YOU know . . . That two Grand Prairians appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show?

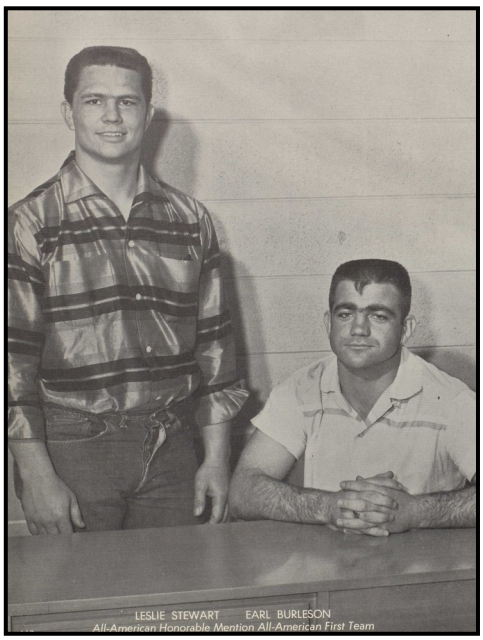
Two members of the GPHS Class of 1958 appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show in early December 1957. Leslie "Les" Stewart and Earl Burleson were stars of the 1957 Gopher football team and were named to the All-American First Team. Each year, Ed Sullivan invited the All-American First Team to appear on his show.

Les Stewart and Earl Burleson, with Ronnie Langford, were tri-captains of the 1957 Gophers. With the combined play of All-American fullback (and place kicker) Earl Burleson (#43) and All-American tackle Les Stewart (#70), plus several all-district teammates, the Gophers were second place District AAAA winners with a record of 8-2. Unfortunately, their final game was a 41-0 nightmare played out on a muddy, snow-topped field in Wichita Falls.

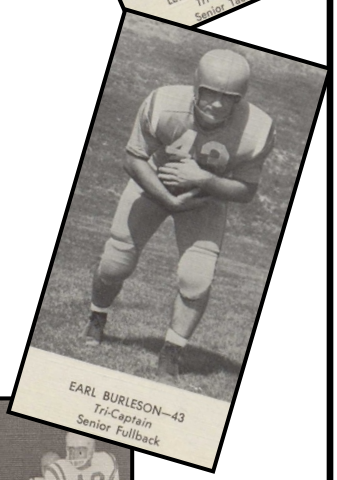
Les Stewart went on to play football at Southern Methodist University where he was football captain and was elected to the Southwest Conference All Academic Team. He earned his Masters in management, but was tragically killed in an auto accident in 1975 at the age of 35. Earl Burleson continues to live in Grand Prairie.















Coming Events

November

11 — Veteran's Day — 5:30 p.m. — Flag Retirement Ceremony—Grand Prairie Historical Museum

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

26 & 27 — THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY — Grand Prairie Historical Museum Closed

December

5 — Copeland Home Christmas Tour — 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.—125 S.W. Dallas St., Grand Prairie

24 & 25 — CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY — Grand Prairie Historical Museum Closed

January



1 — HAPPY NEW YEAR — Grand Prairie Historical Museum Closed

18 — Martin Luther King Birthday — Grand Prairie Historical Museum Closed

23 — Quilt Show—10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.—Grand Prairie Historical Museum

February

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



NEW MEMBER

DEBORAH SHANKS

UPDATE ON "WALKING THROUGH HISTORY" PROJECT



It's not too late to participate in the Commemorative Brick Walkway Project which raises funds to support the Grand Prairie Historical Museum! We appreciate 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).





8 X 8	$200	4 X	$100

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.

FOUND IN THE MUSEUM

Look what I recently found in the Grand Prairie Historical Museum! THREE new workers!

SIERRA BRANTLEY: After a two-year vacancy, the City of Grand Prairie has finally filled the position of Public Historian. Sierra will be working at the museum Mondays through Thursdays from Noon to 4:00 p.m. and Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sierra brings a love of history and museums to the job. In her Public Historian role she looks forward to helping lovers of Grand Prairie history learn about themselves and their surroundings. Sierra specializes in ancient history, archaeology, and early American history and has a Masters degree in Museum Studies. Sierra was a history teacher for six years and has worked in museums in Baltimore, the Dallas Historical Society, and the Crow Museum of Asian Art. She hopes to help others fall in love with Grand Prairie history . Outside of work, she is chasing after her three little boys, hiking in national parks, crafting and reading.



This year we have TWO interns from Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute (GPCI): Melissa Duphorne and Juan Trujillo. They began working at the museum in September and will work on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Both students are seniors and are friends of our last intern, Steliyan Nedelchev, who encouraged them to pursue the GPHO internship.

MELISSA DUPHORNE: Melissa was born in Arlington but goes to school in Grand Prairie. She had not known about the Grand Prairie Historical Museum before Steliyan told her about it, but she was interested to learn about it. Melissa is super friendly and enjoys meeting and greeting people who visit the museum. Her hobbies and interests include being President of the Crochet and Knitting Club at GPCI, learning how to sew, and gaming. She is uncertain about her future studies, but is considering child psychology. Her goal in life is "to be the reason someone smiles in the morning!"



JUAN TRUJILLO: Juan was born in Los Angeles, California, but grew up in Grand Prairie, attending Grand Prairie schools. He started at GPCI as a sixth grader because his sister went there and it was convenient for his mother to take both of them to one school. He has a strong interest in history, particularly of the ancient variety. He is considering his options for his future studies and is even considering going out of the country, possibly to Italy, to study anthropology and/or archaeology. Juan is the more reserved and quiet of the two interns. His hobbies include reading, woodworking, and metal working. He often helps his dad maintain his 18-wheeler truck.

Be sure to stop by the museum to meet Sierra, Melissa and Juan! They are all eager to meet Grand Prairians and learn their stories! I assure you it will be time well-spent on both sides!

Remembering Our Member

DR. ELLEN JEAN "JEANNIE" FLINN FURLONG



Long time GPHO member, Jeannie Flinn Furlong, passed away on August 23, 2026, at the age of 86. Although born in La Junta, Colorado, Jeannie grew up in Grand Prairie, graduating from GPHS with the Class of 1958. In high school, she was very involved and active. She served as Editor of the GEEP yearbook, was class vice president her senior year, sang in the A Capella Choir, and worked as a Teacher's Assistant. She was the daughter of Lois Frances Clark Flinn and Wesley Raymond Flinn. With a lifelong passion for education, she earned a doctorate in education and built a distinguished career in higher education as a tenured professor at Louisiana State University in the College of Education. Her creative interests included folk dancing, square dancing, sewing, needlepoint, knitting and painting. She is survived by her husband, Kendall, her daughter Piipar Riviera, and her son, Robert, along with four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



ELLEN JEAN FLINN

Editor-in-Chief of '58 . GEEP 57-58; Assistant Editor of '57 GEEP 56-57; Associate Editor of the *Prairie Dog* 56-57; Quill and Scroll 56-58, Vice President 57-58; National Honor Society 57-58; A Cappella Choir 55-58; FBLA 56-58, Secretary 57-58; JCL 55-58; TORCH Editor 57-58; Teacher's Assistant 55-56.

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**
Andy Little, Technology Director **technology@gphotx.org**
Rebecca Stegmann, Program Director
John Wylie, Communications Director

2025-20026 GPHO COMMITTEE CHAIRS

, Membership **membership@gphotx.org**
Kathy Ritterhouse, Newsletter **newsletter@gphotx.org**
Rebecca Stegmann, Fundraising
Kathy Ritterhouse, Significant Landmarks
Larry Barnes, Financial Review
Gary Dunbar, Building Manager

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!







Start a conversation when you wear one of our t-shirts. Be the FIRST one on your block to wear a GPHO t-shirt !!

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.

gphotx.org 501(c) 3 corporation facebook.com/grandprairiehistorical