

Dayton Historical Society & Old School Museum

The Dayton History News is produced and distributed by the Dayton Historical Society and the Dayton Old School Museum.

The Society meets in Parker Hall at 6 P.M. the last Monday of each month for a historical program presented by guest speakers. The program is preceded by a Society business/project status meeting and followed by refreshments.

The Old School Museum is located next to Parker Hall at 111 West Houston St. in Dayton and is open Saturdays from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Contact Information

News Editor: Janette (JC) Goulder-Frick

Website: <http://daytontxhistory.com>

eMail: daytontxhistory@gmail.com



Get Your Own Dayton Texas Star!

Stars can be ordered for either homes or businesses. Business orders received to-date include:

- AM Donuts
- American Rice Growers
- Chachere Veterinary
- Chicken Express
- Colbert Elementary
- Dayton Chamber of Commerce
- Dayton Electric Company
- Dayton Farm & Ranch Supply
- Dayton Sports Bar
- Dayton Trading Post
- Dr. Wayne MacDonald
- First Liberty National Bank
- Fordland Estates
- Green Mechanical
- Hall's Veterinary
- Ideal Protein Weight Loss Center
- Kidz Corner
- Kimmie Brown Elementary
- Kwik Kar
- Los Compadres
- McCoy's Building Supply
- Nena's Child Care
- Pace Stencil Funeral Home
- Pecan Wood Mobile Home Park
- Prosperity Bank
- Sterling Funeral Home
- Stephen F. Austin Elementary
- Sumiden Wire Corp
- THS Medical Clinic
- Williamson's Propane

To request an order form, **contact Caroline Wadzeck 936-258-5414 or Wes Williamson 979-204-1451.** Leave a message and you will receive a call back.

Dayton History News

Rice Farming Legacy

A landmark visible miles away for those driving east on FM-1960 towards Dayton is a rice dryer and elevator located at the junction of FM-1960 and SH-321. It was built by Dayton's division of the American Rice Growers Co-Op in 1949.

Rice was first introduced to America in 1685 when a ship from Madagascar landed in Charleston, South Carolina for repairs. The captain gave those who repaired the ship a sack of golden rice seed from the west coast of Africa.

Rice production increased during 1700s and 1800s but was labor-intensive. Two factors triggered rice farming growth: mechanization in the 1840s (Cyrus McCormick's reaper) and a Christian Japanese man named Seito Saibara in 1900s.

In 1863, David French who owned a rice farm in Beaumont became the first major rice producer in Texas. Up until 1892 when Joseph Broussard built a mill in Beaumont, rice was shipped to New Orleans to be milled.

By 1909, 283,282 acres were rice farmed in Texas of which 8,000 acres of rice were farmed within a 7 mile radius of Dayton.

Between the 1920s and 1960s, travelers along Hwy 90 (Old Spanish Trail) would have passed by miles and miles of rice fields on their way between Beaumont and Houston.

By August 1948, there were nearly 15,000 acres of rice in the Dayton

area – at which point the American Rice Growers Dayton Division was formed and 40 local farmers joined.

Prior to Dayton's iconic rice dryer being built, local rice farmers shipped their rice by rail to Beaumont for processing.

A news article from June 1949 indicates that the Co-Op's rice dryer was "modern in every respect" and cost \$265,000 to build. It had a storage capacity of 37,000 barrels and could dry 500 to 600 barrels of rice per hour. The next year, Dayton farmers planted 18,000 acres of rice.

By the 1970s, there were more than 100 rice farmers in Dayton, many of whom were 2nd and 3rd generation Dayton farmers.

In recent years, rice farming in America has declined due to overseas competition and prices. In addition, Dayton's dryer and storage facility was closed in 2004, damaged by Hurricane Ike in 2008 and sold in 2010.

The Stoesser family has withstood the tests of time and trials. Four generations have farmed rice in Dayton since 1915 when Emil Stoesser emigrated from Germany.

His son Eddie and grandsons Jack and Ray carried on the legacy as have Ray's sons Neal and Grant who currently manage over 6,000 acres producing rice and other crops in Liberty and Chambers counties and employ about a dozen people.

Depot Street

The street that runs next to the railroad tracks between Main Street and North Winfree in Dayton is called Depot Street.

It has existed since 1860 when the West Liberty (aka Dayton) segment of the Texas and New Orleans Railroad was completed. Its original name was Railroad Avenue. The T&NO train stopped in Dayton to take on fuel as well as pick up and deliver passengers and commodities.

Depot Street became a busy area as businesses sprang up across the tracks from the train depot building. By 1908, the Original Jones Saloon, William Bolton's Store, the Shroeder Saloon and Salle's Drug Store as well as a hotel were parallel to the railroad tracks.

In 1913, a fire began in the Original Jones Saloon that completely destroyed it and damaged surrounding building. There was no fire department in those days, so people formed a bucket brigade to fight the blaze while others pulled mattresses, furniture and merchandise from the spreading fire. Within 24 hours, the saloon was back up and operating in another building.

The train depot building was used up until the 1970s and torn down in 1986. Items such as square nails and roofing tiles from the depot building are on display at Dayton's Old School Museum.



Priscilla Club

The Dayton Priscilla Club has existed for 108 years having been organized on Nov. 4, 1910 by five ladies - Mrs. Farmer, Babcock, Brown, Sterling and Matthews - in a meeting at Mrs. Farmer's home. Dayton has Texas' oldest Priscilla Club chapter.

Worthy causes and service projects are within their purview. For example:

During World War I (1917), members organized a Red Cross Auxiliary and made comfort kits for each Dayton serviceman, folded bandages, made sweaters and socks, gathered magazines for camps and hospitals, and gathered items for foreign relief.

During World War II (1942-45), members knitted for soldiers, supported the USO and the Red Cross.

When Liberty's Yettie Kersting Memorial Hospital opened in 1945, members provided sheets, pillow cases and tea towels to the hospital.

In 1934, the Priscilla Club coordinated with the city of Dayton and President Roosevelt's New Deal Works Progress Administration to purchase land and build Dayton's first city park on North Winfree.

This activity was triggered when John William Parker died in 1932 and left \$2000 in his will to the Priscilla Club on the condition that it be used to build a park to honor his deceased wife, Emma Blake-Parker. In 2001, the Dayton City Council renamed Dayton City Park to Parker Park.

The club meets monthly (Sept-May) to fellowship, listen to guest speakers and conduct their business meeting.

What's in a Name?

In 2014, a book called "The Streets of Dayton, Texas" was published by Caroline Wadzeck, curator of Dayton's Old School Museum. Caroline's investigation of the subject matter required an incredible number of hours interviewing long-time residents of Dayton and doing extensive historical research.

The book is packed with 190 pages of history regarding the namesakes of 113 of Dayton's streets which fall into 7 origin categories:

- Honored citizens
- Pioneers of Dayton (pre-1900)
- Specific purpose or entity support
- Citizens who died in World War II
- Names in nature or novelty
- Adjacent land owners
- Family & friends of citizens

Take for instance the subject of Pioneers of Dayton (pre-1900). The streets that fit in that category are:

- Cherry Creek Road - John Cherry (1835 pioneer settler)
- Hunnicutt Street - James & Anna Hunnicutt (circa 1900 pioneer developer of French settlement)
- Kindt Street - Abraham F. Kindt (mid-1800s pioneer land broker)
- Linney Street - Michael Linney (mid-1800s pioneer settler)
- Pruitt Street - Edmund Pruett (Early-1800s pioneer settler)

The book is available for sale at the Old School Museum which is open Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm.

Daniel Family Legacy

Located at 305 South Church Street is a home built circa 1910. Marion Price "M.P." Daniel I (1881-1937) and his bride Nannie Blanche Partlow (1886-1955) were married December 23, 1909 and settled into the house soon thereafter.

Their three children - Marion Price Daniel II (1910-1988), Ellen Virginia (1912-?), and William Partlow "Bill" (1915-2006) - were all born while their parents were living there.

M.P. and two partners became owners and editors of the Daytonite - Dayton's first newspaper. He was active in the land business and was Postmaster of Dayton in 1915-1916. The family moved to Liberty in 1917.

The couple's eldest son, Marion Price Daniel II married Jean Houston-Baldwin, great-great-granddaughter of Texas' historic figure Sam Houston. Daniel II served as a Texas State Representative, Texas Attorney General, U.S. Senator, and Governor of Texas (1957-1963).

M.P.'s youngest son, William Partlow Daniel, served as Texas State Representative and Guam Governor.

Marion Daniel III (1941-1981) followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a Texas State Representative (1969-1975).

And this political family legacy all began in the house located at 305 South Church Street in Dayton.

The Daniel legacy lives on in Dayton thanks to Daniel II's donation of land used to develop Dayton's City Park out on FM-1409 and named in his honor - Gov. Bill & Vara Daniel Park.