

## Get Your Own Dayton Texas Star!

Have you ever noticed the large concrete bells in Liberty in front of businesses and at the courthouse?

Well, Dayton residents will now see large concrete Texas stars around town at homes and businesses with the word "DAYTON" at the base of the star.

The star comes unpainted. You can leave it as is, paint it yourself or use the services of a talented local artist willing to custom paint the star for you.

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.



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Stars have been ordered for both homes and businesses. The business orders to-date include:

- American Rice Growers
- AM Donuts
- Chachere Veterinary
- Chicken Express
- Dayton Electric Company
- Dayton Trading Post
- Dr. Wayne MacDonald
- First Liberty National Bank
- Hall's Veterinary
- Kwik Kar
- McCoy's Building Supply
- Nena's Child Care
- Pace Stancil Funeral Home
- Pecan Wood Mobile Home Park
- Sterling Funeral Home

## 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.

# Dayton History News

## Black Gold, Texas Tea

In 1962, a TV show called "The Beverly Hillbillies" premiered with a theme song entitled "The Ballad of Jed Clampett" which included the lyric "And up through the ground come a bubbling crude – oil that is, black gold, Texas tea".

Black gold made history in Texas on January 10, 1901 when the great oil gusher known as Spindletop erupted near Beaumont from a salt dome evidenced by vast sulfur springs and bubbling gas seepages.

By 1902, 285 active wells were operating on Spindletop Hill and 600 oil companies had been chartered including Texas Company (Texaco), Gulf Oil, and Humble Oil (Exxon). Storage facilities, pipelines and refineries were built and many men quickly became millionaires.

It was just a matter of time before the oil boom came to Dayton. A spring near Duncan Lake in south Liberty produced fist-size gas bubbles that burped up through blue sulphur water. Under the leadership of E. B. Picket, a few wells drilled there between 1903 and 1905 brought minimal success.

The legacy continued under E. B.'s son Ernie who partnered with Bill Winfree as South Liberty Oil Co. which began producing commercial quantities of oil in 1925.

This contiguous salt dome divided by the Trinity River took on two identities – South Liberty oilfield and South Dayton oilfield.

In 1962, Ed Goulder (1924-2005) moved to Dayton with his family to manage the South Dayton oilfield (CR-4701) where he remained until his death in 2005.

By 1973, the South Dayton/Liberty oilfield had produced 74 million barrels of oil making it one of the more profitable coastal salt domes.

Comparable failed efforts went into initial exploration of a salt dome six miles southwest of Dayton known as Esperson Dome (CR-1413).

A corporation known as Cranfill & Reynolds drilled the first producing oil well there in 1929 which yielded 800 barrels of oil per day and by 1984, Esperson had produced over 50 million barrels of oil.

Morgan Laird Sr. (1908-1981) was transferred to the Esperson Dome field in 1930 and worked there until his retirement in 1973.

In December 1933, the Pew family purchased Cranfill & Reynolds stock and changed the name to General Crude Oil Company.

The third oilfield in Dayton was also discovered in the 1920s and is known as the North Dayton oilfield (CR-615). Its history is unknown.

**Dayton Police Dept.**

Police forces in America originated with Boston's night watch in 1636. Some of their "watchmen" were paid while others were volunteers.

Dayton's police department began in the 1940s with J.S. Flowers who was City Marshal for 25 years. The force worked days only with the exception of a night watchman named Louise "Frenchy" Cashat Sr.

On the night of June 15, 1950, Cashat stopped to lend aid to two teenagers who ran out of gas. What he didn't know was that the two had stolen the car and stabbed the owner.

They stole Cashat's gun and killed him with it. He became Dayton's one and only fatality to-date of an officer.

It wasn't until the 1980s that a 24-hour police dispatch system was put in place under the direction of Police Chief Ken DeFoor.

The Dayton Police Department has indeed come a long way since the 1940s with its new Police Station and a 30+ person force of officers and civilian employees. The value and integrity the police force brings to Dayton is indeed appreciated.



**Dayton Policeman's Prayer plaque posted next to entrance of forthcoming Police & Fire Museum**

**Believe It or Not?**

About 9:00pm on December 29, 1980, three Dayton residents (2 women and a child) were headed home to Dayton via FM-1485/2100 (near Kingwood Drive in New Caney) when they saw a huge diamond shaped object, the size of the Dayton water tower, hovering at treetop level. It was emitting a bright light and expelling flames and heat from its base.

The heat was so intense that touching the vinyl on the dashboard left an imprint of a witnesses' hand that remained for weeks afterward.

As the object moved upward, the witnesses claimed to see a group of 23 military helicopters that looked like CH-47 Chinooks surround the object and follow it.

In the days following the incident, the three witnesses experienced nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and sunburn symptoms with blisters – equivalent to radiation sickness.

A similar story was told by two other Dayton residents, one of whom was a policeman who claimed to see 12 Chinook helicopters near the same area about the same time.

The military denied having any helicopters in the area and the media/tabloids exploited the story.

NASA suggested involving John Schuessler, an aerospace engineer who was interested in such phenomenon. His use of a Geiger counter did not reveal any evidence of radioactivity; however, he did write a book called *The Cash-Landrum UFO Incident* published in 1998.

**Fredda Nottingham**

Joseph and Minnie Nottingham were living in Humansville, Missouri in 1904 when their daughter Fredda Alice Nottingham was born – the youngest of 7 children.

It wasn't until 1911 that they chose to settle in the Stilson community near Dayton. Miss Fredda attended the Stilson one room school up through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at which point it consolidated with Dayton schools.

After her graduation from Dayton High School in 1923, she achieved a B.S. degree and M.S. degree as well as a teaching certificate.

She taught at several Dayton schools. In 1932, she was made Principal of the Junior High in addition to teaching science.

In the 1940s, during World War II, she served as Principal of both the Junior High and Elementary schools.

As of her retirement in May 1969, Miss Fredda had worked 45 years as a teacher and 37 years as a Dayton Principal. Both an elementary school and an alternative school were named in her honor.

She died January 30, 1993 and was buried at Rosewood Cemetery in Humble where her parents, brother Clyde and sister Elsie were buried.



**Stilson Community**

Most people driving on Hwy 90 rarely notice the lone historical marker about Stilson around 3 miles west of Dayton.

The community of Stilson traces its origins to the arrival in the 1890s of the Texas and New Orleans Railroad.

Out-of-state developers O. H. Stilson and Rodney Hill bought land there in 1896. They advertised the new community to farmers in Iowa. Among those who came to build homes and establish farms were many Swedish immigrants, including C. F. Seaberg and C. D. Nelson.

By the late 1890s the town boasted a fourteen-room hotel, general store, gin, blacksmith shop, rice mill, warehouse, barber shop, post office, railroad depot, and school.

The one-room Stilson school served students in all grades, taught by one teacher. The school was closed in 1918 when area children began attending classes in Dayton.

The Stilson Post Office was established in 1898 and was located in the general store operated by C. S. Brown but was discontinued in 1925. Rural mail delivery from Dayton to Stilson began in 1926.

**Texas State Historical Marker located on Hwy 90 near site of Stilson community**

