

## Get Your Own Dayton Texas Star!



Order for homes or businesses.  
Business orders to-date include:

- AM Donuts
- American Rice Growers
- Chachere Veterinary
- Chicken Express
- Colbert Elementary
- Custom Cuts
- Dayton Chamber of Commerce
- Dayton Chiropractic Center
- Dayton City Hall
- Dayton Community Center
- Dayton Electric Company
- Dayton Farm & Ranch Supply
- Dayton High School
- 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
- John Griffin Surveyors
- Jose's Mexican Restaurant
- Kidz Corner
- Kimmie Brown Elementary
- Kwik Kar
- Liberty/Dayton Chamber
- Los Compadres
- Mainframe 24 Hour Wrecker
- Marshall Family Practice
- McCoy's Building Supply
- Mike's BBQ Restaurant
- Nena's Child Care
- New Day Massage
- Pace Stancil Funeral Home
- Pecan Wood Mobile Home Park
- Prosperity Bank
- Richter Elementary
- Sterling Funeral Home
- Stephen F. Austin Elementary
- Sumiden Wire Corp
- THS Medical Clinic
- Williamson's Propane

### Historical Society

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.

### Contact Information

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### Rent Parker Hall For Your Event

To reserve Parker Hall, contact:  
**Lee Krigar at 936-776-1161**  
 or **936-257-0330**; or  
**Felix Skarpa at 936-776-1039.**

### Old School Museum

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

## The First Bank

The Texas-New Orleans Railroad through Dayton was completed in 1860 and brought tremendous growth potential as did Dayton's proximity to the Trinity River which facilitated river boats and a ferry crossing.

However, 25 years later in 1885, the city of Dayton still reported a small population of 60 people but did have a post office, a school and two churches – First Methodist (est. 1855) and First Baptist (est. 1878).

Fast forward another 25 years to 1910 and Dayton reported a population of 2,500 people along with a bank, a weekly newspaper and two cotton gins. An exponential growth spurt had occurred.



The first bank was Dayton State Bank established on March 7, 1907. Operations began once the bank building at 202 N. Church St. was completed. (See photo above)

Demand drove the need for a larger building which was built in 1919 at 106 N. Main St.

In compliance with The Glass-Steagall Banking Act signed by President Roosevelt on June 16, 1933, Dayton State Bank became FDIC insured (Cert #9975) for \$2500 on January 1, 1934.

The federal Banking Act followed the failure of nearly 5,000 banks during the 1930s. Having survived the Great Depression, Dayton State Bank grew to 4 branches.

After 90 years, Dayton State Bank merged with Paradigm Bank on December 8, 2000 – which merged on September 1, 2001 with Prosperity Bank.

Both bank sites are still in use with Dr. Wayne MacDonald at the Church St. facility and Prosperity Bank at the Main St. location.

## The First Newspaper & Its Owners

The first known Dayton newspaper was called "The Daytonite". Records show that the newspaper first "came off the press in 1909" and was owned and edited by 3 partners – one of whom was Dayton citizen Marion Price (M.P.) Daniel whose descendants left an indelible legacy in county, state and national politics.

On January 1, 1912, ownership of the Daytonite changed hands when Walter Neel arrived in Dayton and struck a deal with M.P. Daniel and his partners to purchase the newspaper business that very same day for \$1000 cash.

Neel had published a newspaper called The Hendrick Leader in Oklahoma before moving to Dayton.

The Daytonite newspaper held a prominent place in Dayton's history for 3 decades until it combined with the Vindicator which claims "the oldest continuously printing news source in South Liberty County since 1887".

As the long-term owner of Dayton's first newspaper "The Daytonite", Walter Salathiel Neel left a mark on Dayton's history; however, he is also renown for other contributions.

Within two years of arriving in Dayton, Walter was elected Justice of the Peace for Liberty County Precinct 4 and served two terms in this capacity from January 1915 to January 1919.



In that capacity, Neel presided over numerous marriages as well as ruling on small civil matters and misdemeanor crimes – all the while, publishing the Daytonite newspaper.

Under his leadership, the City of Dayton incorporated in 1926. That same year, he was elected the first mayor of the city of Dayton.

In addition, he was integral to establishing a volunteer fire department complete with hose, fire truck and waterworks.

Walter also served Dayton as a magistrate, city alderman, city secretary as well as unofficial city historian. He was a member of the Dayton Rotary club and Dayton's Masonic Lodge.

The 4-bedroom Dayton home that Walter had built in 1917 is still located at 1204 North Main St. A Texas State Historical Marker was erected there in November 2014 which honors both him and the home.

Walter and his wife, Selma, were married for 70 years. He died in 1962 at the age of 94.

## Akokisa Indians

As the 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest city in the state of Texas, Liberty (and West Liberty which became known as Dayton) is home to a wealth of history – including that of American Indians.

Early 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish, French and Anglo explorers found about 3,500 Akokisa (or Orcoquisac) Indians living in Chambers, Galveston, Harris, and Liberty counties.

Mass burial grounds, arrow points, pottery and other historical Indian artifacts have been discovered in both Dayton and Liberty.

The discovery locations are known as the Jamison Hill and Daniel sites. They are located on opposite sides of the Trinity River. There is also another artifact site nearer Dayton.

Dayton's Old School Museum is privileged to have received several of those precious Indian artifacts which are on display in the museum's Gallery Room. They were discovered at the Jamison Hill site in Dayton's Kenefick community.



The El Orcoquisac Archeological District in Wallisville is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places as an important settlement of the Akokisa and Bidai Indian tribes.

## Navratil Cotton Gin

About 1926, a Czechoslovakian immigrant named J. E. Navratil built a cotton gin in Eastgate and became the owner/operator.

In 1935, he sold the Eastgate cotton gin and built one in Dayton. After his death in April 1936, his son Edward became the owner/operator.

There was intense competition among the area cotton gins to be the first to produce a bale of cotton each season and receive recognition. The Navratil Gin soon became the consistent winner.

During the 1940s, there was a cotton quarantine and Navratil was the only gin between Houston and Lake Charles with the required seed sterilizer. Without sterilization, cotton could not be shipped to market.

1951 was a banner year for cotton – the best since the 1930s due to low rainfall with Liberty County ginning 3000 bales that each weighed about 500 pounds.

By 1965, Navratil Gin was the only cotton gin left in Liberty County of the nine that previously existed and it was only in partial operation.

