

“Putting Dayton On the Map” Museum Display

Museum Curator, Caroline Wadzeck, has designed a new exhibit that is now on display at the Old School Museum. It includes:

- a map showing Spanish/Mexican land grants from 1830 along the West Liberty (Dayton) side of the Trinity River;
- 1888 map of West Liberty;
- map of Dayton Lumber Company complex from 1905-1920s;
- 1927 Dayton map;
- map of the original Dayton school complex 1910-1976;
- 1942 Dayton map; and
- 1965 Dayton map.

Each map display is accompanied with anecdotes about the people, businesses, buildings, etc. indicated on the maps.

Featured Museum Benefactor Item

Dayton Historical Society & the Old School Museum subsist on contributions. There are items for sale at the museum.

One of the most fascinating is the book “Streets of Dayton” written by museum curator Caroline Wadzeck.

Stop by and pick up your copy at the museum on Saturday!



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.

For more information, see the Society and Museum website:
<http://daytontxhistory.com>

To get on the distribution list for Dayton History News, submit a request to the newsletter editor, Janette (JC) Goulder-Frick using the Society website contact page:
<https://www.daytontxhistory.com/contact>

Dayton History News

West Liberty becomes Dayton

Dayton, on U.S. Highway 90 three miles west of Liberty in southwest Liberty County, was first called West Liberty and was considered part of the town of Liberty, founded in 1831.

The Trinity River divided the two parts of the town: Liberty was on its east bank, and West Liberty was on a hill three miles west of the river. A road and a ferry directly connected the two.

The Mexican government allocated a four-league (48 square miles) land grant that was set aside for a town they called Santisima Trinidad de la Libertad which is now known as Liberty. Note: 1 league = 12 square miles.

One of the early settlers to East Texas was Isaiah Cates Day who came to West Liberty in 1830 at the age of 18. After the death of his first wife, he married Martha Caroline Munson, daughter of Micajah Munson and Elizabeth Everett.

Martha's family was well respected and had marital ties to other prominent families in Liberty. The land they owned was referred to as the “Munson League”.

Isaiah became the owner of a large plantation on the Munson league as well as a respected rancher and business man.

He acquired land grants from Mexico prior to 1839 and from the Republic of Texas in 1839.

When the Texas and New Orleans Railroad was being built in the 1850s through West Liberty, Isaiah Day provided labor from his plantation to assist.

Upon completion of the track in 1860, train conductors referred to the railroad flag stop as both Days Station and Dayton Station. Note: A railroad flag or whistle stop refers to a train stopping only if it has cargo or passengers to load or unload.

In 1877, the name Dayton was applied to the local post office. The official name of the town remained West Liberty until the mid-1880s.



Isaiah Day
“Papa Day”
Gravestone
1812-1879
Bryan-Neyland
Cemetery
Liberty, TX

Martha Day
Gravestone
1823-1860
French Cemetery
Dayton, TX

The French Cemetery

The French Cemetery derives its name from a local tradition about a group of French settlers who were killed and buried near the site sometime during the 18th century.

Although no physical evidence of the burials has been found, the name has been in common use for more than 100 years.

During the mid-1800s, the cemetery was referred to as the Pruet Family Cemetery which makes sense due the fact that the graveyard is located on land acquired by Beasley Pruet from the Mexican government in 1824.

When Beasley died in 1835, he was buried on his land grant. The earliest marked grave is that of Martha Day, a daughter-in-law of Beasley Pruet, and wife of Dayton namesake Isaiah Cates Day.

In 1946, landowners W. T. Jamison, Sr. (1878-1962) and J. N. Coleman (1882-1948) formally set aside these two acres of the French Cemetery.

The cemetery is located on Texas FM-1008 to the right of the entrance to Governor Bill & Vara Daniel Park.



Crossroads Military Memorial

Ever noticed the flag pole at the crossroad of Hwy 146 and Hwy 90 in front of the Stripes gas station?

Getting up close will reveal five plaques – one for each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces – Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy & Marine Corps. Each plaque is engraved with – “All Gave Some” and “Some Gave All”.

Centered between the two phrases is a marble background with a round gold symbol with the name of a service branch.

In the center is a flagpole with a stone marker at the base that states: *“Lest We Forget ... This edifice is dedicated to the men and women of the United States Military services. Never have so few done so much, for so many! September 11, 2007.”*

It then lists the city officials responsible for the memorial:

- Steve Stephens, Mayor
- Haywood Pruitt, Mayor Pro Tem
- Arnold Builders, Contractor
- Jay Knight, Design Architect
- And City Council Members:
- Ricky Brown, Barbara Zaruba
- Bill Gay, Felix Skarpa



Parker Park

Located at 1207 North Winfree Street, Parker Park has stood the test of time. In 1932, John William Parker included a clause in his will leaving money to Dayton’s Priscilla Club with the condition that they were to use the funds to facilitate building a park dedicated to John’s wife, Emma Blake Parker, who had been a faithful member of the Priscilla Club.

Over the years, the park had gone into disrepair; however, in April 2017, the park was rededicated to the citizens of Dayton by:

- Mayor Jeff Lambricht,
 - Mayor Pro Tem Dwight Pruitt
 - City Manager David Douglas
 - And City Council members:
 - Josh Townsend, Sherial Lawson
 - Dr. John S. Johnson, Troy Barton
- In cooperation with the Park Board led by Park Board Chairman David Parker with Commissioners:
- Gala Robinson, Charles Carden
 - Trudie Dewey, Liz Pruitt
 - Connie Lehan, Larry Wilburn,
 - Howie Howeth



Historic Homes Feature

Mention Ford Avenue to anyone who’s lived in Dayton for most of their life and the response will be, “Seen the old Pruet house?”

That’s because it is the oldest home in Dayton – built in 1896 by Edmond Pruet Sr. to serve as headquarters for his large ranching operation.

It is more often described as the 2 story house with the giant live oak trees whose branches stretch way out over Ford Avenue.

When the Pruet family moved from Virginia, they brought live oak acorns with them and planted them in a square around the house.

The original home was a two story frame with a half story above the two floors. It was built with pine lumber hauled by wagons from Louisiana and the flooring is 1-1/4 inches thick. It also has three fireplaces with solid oak mantles.

Although the home has changed hands several times in the past 120 years, owners continued to value the historical significance of the Pruet place – Dayton’s oldest home.

