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- Dayton Seafood & Steak
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- First Liberty National Bank
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- McDonalds Restaurant
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- Mike's BBQ Restaurant
- New Day Massage
- Post Oak Bank
- Richter Elementary
- THS Medical Clinic
- Williamson's Propane

**Interested? Contact Caroline Wadzeck
936-402-3797 or cwadzeck@hotmail.com**

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.

**Newsletter or Website
Contact Information**

Editor: Janette (JC) Goulder-Frick
<http://daytonxhistory.com>

**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

Dr. Reginald Wilson

Nestled between Allstate Insurance and Zipps Liquor on Main Street is a shell of a building without a roof that was a hub of benevolence in Dayton for decades.

Constructed in 1949, the structure at 105 N. Main St. was built for Dr. Claxton Reginald Wilson's medical practice which he performed for nearly 40 years.

A 1944 graduate of Southwestern Medical College (aka University of Texas Southwestern), Dr. Wilson was honored earlier this year, on his 98th birthday (February 24, 2018) by his alma mater as being the last living graduate of the medical school's first graduating class.

During his first semester at UT Austin, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor triggering America's involvement in World War II.

As a medical student at the college, he participated in Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) drills twice a week in full military uniform.

After graduation, Captain Wilson served as a medic trainer at Fort Sheridan near Chicago for two years. The nurse on his first day in the operating room was Elizabeth Olson whom he married in 1945.

After the war, Dr. Wilson moved to Dayton with his wife and 2-month-old daughter Patty. They raised two more children in Dayton – Randy and Larry.

In his words, "There was a shortage of doctors in a lot of towns at the time.



Captain Reginald Wilson

Dayton had recently lost a physician, and the growing town was left with only one doctor who asked me to settle in this cattle-and-rice community."

"As a general practitioner, I did everything, including house calls until the 1960s, and completed more than 2,000 baby deliveries right here in Dayton."

Dr. Wilson's practice in Dayton opened in 1947. Two months later, on April 16th, the other physician in town, Dr. E. R. Richter, called him regarding an explosion in Texas City. All doctors and firemen in the region were needed. (continued)

Dr. Reginald Wilson



Texas City Disaster of 1947

Dayton’s two doctors raced 50 miles behind a Dayton fire truck to the port of Texas City where they were faced with the largest non-nuclear explosion ever registered.

At least 581 people died and more than 5,000 were injured, including 1,784 who received care at 21 area hospitals.

They went into battlefield triage mode with the first priority being given to those who could be saved.

Wilson said, “We went right on into what was left. The first explosion did most of the damage. Mostly I remember the bodies. There were so many.”

The explosion resulted when 2,200 tons of ammonium nitrate on the freighter SS Grandcamp detonated around 9 a.m. and caused a chain reaction of fires and explosions on other ships and nearby oil-storage facilities.

In 1962, Dr. Wilson made the first of many foreign medical mission trips to places like El Salvador, Honduras, Belize, Bolivia and Mexico.

He helped establish clinics in the states of Yucatan, Quintana Roo and Campeche and experienced flying to jungle clinics.

In Indiana Jones style, Dr. Wilson and his pilot Jack Walker have been credited with the discovery of Mayan roads, glyphs, plazas, courts, temples and 8 pyramids along with underground and secret rooms.

Known as the ruins of Okop, the site is the second-largest Mayan complex found south of Chichen Itza in Mexico.

In his later years, he became a member of the Galveston chapter of the Laffite Society which researches and preserve the sites and history of privateers such as Jean and Pierre Lafitte.

He is well known among regional historians and his name can be found in several books relating to buccaneers of the Gulf of Mexico and the western Caribbean. The Galveston Lafitte Society honored him in 2012 for his contributions.

He retired in 1982 from the medical profession after four operations in six months for a detached retina that distorted his vision and caused macular degeneration.

Upon reflection, Wilson said, “It’s been a good life. I never would have dreamed I would live so long and see all of the world that I have seen.”

Historic Downtown Dayton Buildings

If a Dayton citizen wanted to take a visitor on a tour of downtown Dayton’s most historically significant business buildings, use of Cook St. is essential.

Cook St. @ N. Church St.

Southeast corner – 111 N. Church St.
Built in 1938, the building was used by the Dayton Volunteer Fire Department and as City Hall. The construction project was facilitated by resources from President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s depression era Works Progress Administration (WPA). It is still used for City of Dayton offices.

Southwest corner – 117 Cook St.
This was the location of a two-story wood-sided Masonic Lodge built in 1895. Dayton State Bank (1st location) used the 1st floor until it’s new building across the street was complete while the Masons met on the 2nd floor.

The current brick building was built in 1959 for use as the 3rd location of Dayton’s post office. After the current post office was built at 110 S. Main St., the building became Dayton City Hall.

There is a plaque on the building that commemorates its Masonic Lodge roots.

Northwest corner – 202 N. Church St.
The structure was built as Dayton State Bank (2nd location) in 1907. Dr. Ernest Richter bought the building in 1936 for his medical practice and used it for 44 years until his death in 1980. Dr. Wayne MacDonald acquired the building after Dr. Richter’s death and still operates his medical practice there.

Northwest corner – 302 N. Church St.
Next to Dr. MacDonald’s office is land originally owned by William Bolton. He sold it to G. J. Peterson in 1944 who built Peterson’s Plumbing in 1947.

Cook St. @ N. Main St.

Southeast corner – 111 N. Main St.
Built in 1919 as Dayton State Bank (3rd location), the construction year is prominently displayed above the front door. Allstate Insurance is the current owner. In 1956, Dayton State Bank built a new bank (4th and final location) across the street at 106 N. Main St. It merged with Prosperity Bank in 2001.

Northeast corner – 205-313 N. Main St.
Adjacent to the parking lot on the northeast corner is a row of buildings constructed in 1912. Various businesses have come and gone over the past 106 years. Nowadays, Texas Kountry Kitchen is a popular gathering spot for locals to have breakfast and lunch.

Northeast corner – View of Rice Dryer
From the corner of N. Church and N. Main streets is a view of Dayton’s iconic rice dryer built in 1949. The structure was erected next to the railroad tracks to facilitate shipment.

The complex consists of three concrete structures on 2 acres of land that were used to dry and store rice until damaged by Hurricane Ike in 2008.

Rice growing became prominent in Texas in the 1860s and continues to be a major crop today. There are still several rice dryers in the area that all reach capacity during harvest season.