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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

River of the most Holy Trinity

Trinity
High Bridge
overhead
(torn down)
and Hwy 90
truss bridge
built 1930s
(not used now)

Note horse rider
on High Bridge
and automobile
underneath on
truss bridge.

(Source: Liberty
Vindicator)



As the western boundary of Dayton, the Trinity River has been an important component of our town's history.

The river has had several names throughout the centuries. The first known name was used by the Caddo Indians who referred to it as the "Akokisa River" after the Indians who lived along the lower banks in what is now the towns of Liberty and Dayton.

A 1572 map attributed to a Spanish cosmographer Alonzo de Santa Cruz, who had access to all documents relating to the maritime expeditions named it the "Rio del Oro" or "River of Gold".

The French explorer Robert de LaSalle traversed the Trinity River in 1685 and called it the "River of Canoes."

This was likely attributable to the Akokisa Indians who were renown for making canoes from cypress trees.

In 1689, the Viceroy of Spain was alarmed by reported French activity, so he sent a Spanish expedition to East Texas under Captain Alonzo de Leon, with one hundred men.

On Friday, 19 May 1690, Captain de Leon came to the river. A custom of Spanish explorers was to name places after religious holy days.

So, they chose "Rio de la Santissima Trinidad" which means "River of the most Holy **Trinity**" in honor of the Catholic holy day called "Sunday of the Holy Trinity" which was to occur two days later (Sunday, 21 May 1690).

Martha

Looking at a map of this area reveals 16 communities outside the city limits that are dots on the map of Dayton.

One of those dots is the community of Martha, located at CR-668 three miles north of the intersection of Hwy 90 and Hwy 321.

Martha was established as a railroad shipping point in 1908 upon completion of the Beaumont, Sour Lake and Western Railway which also went through Kenefick and Fullerton.

The New York Land Company purchased numerous acres and platted it into small farms and a town site. Land agents were plentiful, and they enticed people from Louisiana to purchase land at a nominal price.

As the town grew, a hotel was erected along with a tomato canning plant and a cucumber pickling vat.

The people who moved into the area needed educational facilities for their children, so a one-room school house was built that operated from 1913 to 1917.

The teachers included Truei Neel, Pearl White, Maedee Alford and O. A. Hilburn – each of whom taught alone for one school year. Known students were from the Barkeley, Coker, White and Weidel families.

The Martha School faced west and was located next to the railroad tracks at the dead-end of the road that is now known as CR-6682.

After consolidation into Dayton Independent School District, the school house was moved across the road and made into a home.

Atascosito

In the early 18th century, the Spanish controlled Texas while the French controlled Louisiana. The border between the French and Spanish territories was the Red River.

The French repeatedly crossed the border into East Texas to trade with the Indians and tried to influence them to turn against the Spanish.

A Spanish military outpost and settlement called Atascosito first appeared on a Texas map in 1756. It was established in the vicinity of the Trinity River to serve as a barrier against the French.

The surrounding area was known as the Atascocita District which evolved into 10 counties – Jasper, Hardin, Liberty, Orange, San Jacinto, Polk, Newton, Chambers and Tyler.

A road established in the 1700s by Spanish explorer Alonzo de Leon for military and trade use between Refugio/Goliad (south of Victoria) and the Atascosito outpost became known as the Atascosito Trail.

FM-1960, which ends in Dayton, follows the path of the Atascosito Trail until it crosses Lake Houston into Huffman where a historical marker regarding the trail has been erected.



1956 Bicentennial Celebration

Elizabeth Munson homestead marker

Erected in 1956 by Bicentennial Committee at site of her 1800s plantation home

Discovered recently while clearing the property



In April 1956, Liberty County citizens celebrated the 200th birthday of the Atascosito outpost and settlement for four days packed full of special events.

One of the many events was a program entitled the “Grand Ole Opry Show” which included professional entertainers such as Minnie Pearl, Ed Sullivan and Babe Didrikson Zaharias as well as Roy Acuff with his band and Jan Garber with his orchestra.

Roy Rogers, Dale Evans and two of their children came to the celebration and visited a replica of Liberty County’s first courthouse (made with logs) which served as the event headquarters.

Other activities included an old-time medicine show, carnival and an action packed Indian village.

A cast of 350 local citizens put on a historical pageant entitled “Cavalcade of Liberty” with drama, music and dance as well as period specific costumes and acts.

A special committee led by W. D. Partlow researched the original homesites of colonists who were deemed the first settlers in Mexico’s

Atascocita district (prior to the Republic of Texas being established).

The committee had markers made that were cast bronze plaques mounted on heavy concrete blocks.

Grants were identified by the name of the person whose name was recorded as the grantee.

Dayton pioneers honored among the 28 Liberty County markers placed in 1956 were Elizabeth Munson, William Duncan and John A. Williams – all from South Dayton.

Markers were also established at various Liberty County homesteads for pioneers with the names of McFaddin, Spinks, Yocom, Self, Minchey, White, Orr, Hardin, Coronado, Strong, Johnston, Green, Miller, Fields, Cherry, Davis, Donohoe, and Dever.

In a speech to the Liberty Lions Club in 1966, Partlow expressed regret that not all homesites were found and encouraged others to carry on with the placement of markers. (Source: *Liberty, Liberty County, and the Atascosito District* by Miriam Partlow, 1974 – Dayton Public Library)