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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 Historical Society: The Society has reconvened its monthly meetings effective June 28, 2021 at Parker Hall at 6 P.M. the last Monday of each month for a historical program presented by guest speaker(s). The program is preceded by a Society business meeting and followed by refreshments.

Dayton History News

Historic Drug Stores

Dayton's downtown historical district was the site of its earliest drug stores.

Directly across the street from Dayton's existing Kountry Kitchen restaurant (313 N. Main St.) is a parking lot which was once the site of several businesses lining N. Main St.

In the early 1900s, one of those historic businesses was Heal's Drug Store which was flanked by Dayton's first post office adjacent to Heal's on the southside and to the Red & White Grocery Store owned by the Wrights on the northside.

In May 1924, Heal's Drugstore was purchased from Mrs. Heal by brothers Joseph Drue (J.D.) McGinty Sr. (1895-1976) and Abe Ernest (A.E.) McGinty Sr. (1898-1980) via a promissory note of 28 monthly payments of \$125 (i.e., \$3,500).

J. D. McGinty, Sr. had learned the basics of his trade while serving in the Army Medical Corps during World War I.

Eventually, the McGinty drug store relocated a block away to the site of what was subsequently known as

Pappy's BBQ restaurant and is now known as Mike's BBQ (117 Bryan St.).

Joseph Drue McGinty Jr. (1928-2004), son of owner J.D. McGinty Sr., worked in his father's drugstore as a pharmacist.

He and his brother-in-law Ernest Roland "Sonny" Richter Jr. (1939-2014) took over the pharmacy business upon retirement of the original owners J.D. Sr. and Abe McGinty.

Ernest Richter Jr. married Patricia Ann "Tish" McGinty who still lives in Dayton as do their children – daughter Robyn Richter & son Ernest Roland (Bubba) Richter, III.

Note: Sonny Richter was the son of Dr. Ernest Roland Richter Sr. (1912-1980) who served as a doctor in Dayton beginning in 1936 and in whose honor Richter Elementary school is named.

After operating for about 75 years, McGinty's drugstore was sold to Brookshire Brothers who incorporated the pharmacy into their Dayton grocery store.



Memoirs of John Hlavaty (1893-1980)

Part #1 (reprint)

In 1995, a committee composed of 6 former administrators and students published the History of Dayton ISD.

The authors were Jack Unkel, Lloyd Gilbert, Dovie Norcross, Bonnie Campbell-Rigby, Hazel Knight-Carney and Patsie Brown-David.

Included were the following insights of former Dayton student John Hlavaty.

“The Martin and Rosenia Dancak Hlavaty family moved to Liberty County from Burleson County about 1897. They had come to America from Moravia and settled in Burleson County in 1885 or 1890. They traveled by boat from New York to Galveston. Martin Hlavaty spoke English, Moravian and some Polish languages. Their four daughters Rosenia (Mrs. Joe Vrana), Annie (Mrs. John Danek), Frances (Mrs. Joe Grossman), and Mary Hlavaty were born in Moravia. Their son, John Martin, was born March 28, 1893 in Merle, Texas in Burleson County.

They moved to Liberty County by train and also made several trips by wagon. The family settled on Grossman land at Sheeks, eight miles southwest of Dayton near the Southern Pacific Railroad. Sheeks was a train stop with a rice warehouse and a depot. There were about ten families living in the Esperson Dome area. Employment was available at two sawmills, the railroad and some local farmers. There were no

cars and no roads, just wagon trails through the woods and some of the open land. There was no drainage. The August 6, 1900 hurricane destroyed homes and crops. Many families moved immediately, leaving behind some of their belongings such as furniture, harnesses and plows.

Martin Hlavaty was the first person to bale hay in the Sheeks community. He bought a hay baler from the Haymans for \$2 soon after he arrived in Liberty County.

Highway 90 was the first dirt road that was built by the county. That was about 1910. There was no bridge across Cedar Bayou until then. By traveling on the north side of the Southern Pacific Railroad to the Trinity River, crossing the railroad to the south, boarding the ferry and crossing the Trinity, one could reach Liberty.

Barbers Hill, next Eastgate, then Wolf Island Roads were built in that order. Mr. Hlavaty gave no date. The Cox Road was built about 1915. The Commissioner asked each man to contribute three days of work on the roads or one day for a man with his team of mules or horses.

The Goose Creek Railroad was built between 1912 and 1915. There was a rice warehouse on this railroad, but its primary purpose was for a refinery in Goose Creek.

Memoirs of John Hlavaty (Continued)

Part #2

The Dayton Canal was built by the Moore’s Bluff Rice Company about 1940. The Company bought about 1700 acres of land and furnished land and water. The canals brought in rice farmers.

“During depression years (1930 – 1940), there was very little rice farming. There were no rice dryers. The rice was dried in the fields in shocks.

The area furnished opportunity for hunting. The men hunted ducks, geese, rabbits, squirrels, minks, quails, prairie chickens (last seen in 1914), sand hill cranes (which came when pastures were burned) and during winter months, the whooping cranes.

Much of the game left the area with the coming of rice farms. Ducks and geese increased in number (to the dismay of the rice farmers) and knocked down the shocks of rice.

There were no cemeteries at that time. At the south end of Cox Road where it joins FM-1413, on land belonging to the Zaruba family, there were four graves.

Flora Delek from Sheeks and Thomas Hlavaty are the only ones known to have been buried there.

These graves are now under the spoil dirt of the drainage ditch. There are two graves on the Hatcherville Road.

“During this time, there were 25 or 30 houses on Cox Road. Some of the families were the Shaw family (Mr. Shaw was depot agent in Dayton), the Ed Cox family, Neil Esperson (who built the Esperson Building in Houston), Joe Vrana, John Danek, John Vajdak and Asbek families.

“John Hlavaty speaks of a wealthy family from the north buying land (200 acres) in the area and raising sheep. In 1908-1910, a sawmill was built that employed 300 people. Timber was cut from the Trinity woods to build more than a hundred houses.”

Original Sources: Tapes furnished by Rosalie Hlavaty-Dlouhy “Dad Tells It Like It Was”; and County School Records.



**John Martin Hlavaty
(1893-1980)
Josie Victoria Stasney-Hlavaty
(1892-1972)
Sterling White Cemetery
Highlands, TX**