

Historic Markers

HISTORIC MESQUITE, INC.

The Mesquite area is home for several historic sites. Some of those with Texas state historical markers are listed below by name, location and the text of the state marker.

MESQUITE

Brickyard Cemetery (Peachtree Rd. between Military and Gross Rd.) - Designated a Historic Texas Cemetery, 2002. More information.

City of Mesquite (Downtown square) - Texas site marker: In May 1873, Texas & Pacific Railroad engineer, A.R. Alcott platted a new depot town named Mesquite. the post office opened the following year. The community developed along the rail line, with businesses initially facing Front Street. As the town grew, business owners turned their front doors to Main Street in an effort to create a Town Square. Voters incorporated Mesquite in 1887. In 1903, following a legal challenge, the City re-incorporated with new boundaries. Mesquite, which began with an agrarian economy, grew rapidly in the second half of the 20th century as a Dallas suburb. The school district, established in 1901, is a draw for new residents, and the City continues to grow.

Sam Bass Train Robbery (100 Yards NW) (Mesquite downtown square) - Texas site marker: Sam Bass - with Seab Barnes, Hank Underwood, "Arkansas" Johnson, and Frank Jackson - held up a Texas & Pacific train here, April 10, 1878. They took \$152, but missed hidden shipment of \$30,000. In planning a bank robbery 3 months later, Bass was fatally shot by Rangers. (1968)

First Methodist Church of Mesquite (300 N. Galloway Ave.) - Texas site marker: In 1857, prior to the incorporation of the town of Mesquite, a group of area residents began gathering occasionally for Methodist worship services led by circuit riding Preacher W.K. Masten. Services were held in a nearby building known variously as the Frost Schoolhouse or the Bennett Schoolhouse. By 1863, the group had organized formally as the First Methodist Episcopal Church, south. Services continued in the schoolhouse until 1880, when charter members John L. and Lucy Futrell deeded this land to the congregation for the construction of a church building. Soon a small wood-frame structure was erected. Later damaged by a storm, it was rebuilt in 1900. In 1887 when the town of Mesquite was incorporated, charter member J. E. Russell became the town's first mayor, and the downtown area began to develop near the church site. As the population of Mesquite increased, so did the congregation, and several progressively larger sanctuaries were built after 1916 to accommodate its growth. Because of denominational mergers, the congregation changed its name to the First Methodist Church of Mesquite in 1939, and to the First United Methodist Church of Mesquite in 1968. (1991)

Florence Ranch Homestead (1424 Barnes Bridge Road) - Recorded Texas Historic Landmark: David W. (1848-1932) and Julia Savannah (Beaty) Florence (1850-1914) built the first portion of this ranch house in 1871-72 after moving here from Van Zandt County. Elaborate wood trim decorates the gallery of the simple frame structure. The house was enlarged by the 1890's, when the Florence Homestead covered 730 acres. After Florence retired in 1908, his son Emet (1885-1963) and Emet's wife Perle (Curtis) (1889-1976) continued to run the ranch, known as Meadow View Farm. (1978)

Galloway Farmstead (18680 IH 635) - Texas Site Marker: Confederate veteran Benjamin Franklin Galloway (1833-1912) And his wife Eliza (Fletcher) (1852-1883) came to Texas from Tennessee in 1872. Their son Bedford Forest is said to have been born in a covered wagon at Duck Creek (Garland) in 1873. They purchased 101 acres in 1874 and Benjamin Galloway erected a cabin where they lived while a two-room house was built. A farmer, he also raised horses, mules and cattle. A second son, Nathan Lemmon, was born in 1876. Twin sons were born in 1883, but they lived only a day, and Eliza Galloway died soon after. Her niece, Clara Gentry, came to live with the family that year. At that time Benjamin had a Blackland Prairie hay company. Dallas clients included Tennessee Dairy, Caruth Farm and Ringling Brothers Circus. Benjamin Galloway married Amanda Jane Miller (1848-1938) of Tennessee in 1887 and built a 1½ story addition onto the home place. The structure eventually featured an entrance hall, bedroom, parlor, and a kitchen on the first level, with children's rooms upstairs. A son was born in 1888, but died at birth. Bedford returned home after attending college in Waco and New Orleans and made his living farming, baling hay and ginning cotton. He and his first wife, Nannie Lawrence, had four children. After her death in 1915, he married Bertha Dakan in 1917 and they had two daughters. Bedford was a city alderman, a member of the school board, and served as mayor of Mesquite from 1927 to 1940. A Galloway descendant restored the house between 1949 and 1950 and built another addition in 1955. Designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1973, the Galloway Home Place was moved from this site to a more rural location in Sunnyvale in an effort to protect it from encroaching urban development. (2000)

Lawrence Farmstead (701 E. Kearney St.) - Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic places (1999), Family Heritage Farmstead : The son of an original member of the Mercer Colony, Stephen Decatur Lawrence (1853-1934) received about 640 acres of farmland on his twenty-first birthday. He began building the first structure, a small home, on this site in 1874. In 1882 contractor Charley Florrer built a T-plan house about six feet east of the original structure. The new house was of clapboard construction with square nails. In 1886, a kitchen room was added, altering the building to a cruciform floor plan. The striking central tower is an example of the Victorian features of the home, which include the steeply pitched overhanging roof and prominent porches. Other structures were added to the Farmstead, on which Stephen D. Lawrence and his first wife Louisa E. Porter (1861-1891) reared three surviving children. Charley Florrer built the barn in 1887; other structures erected just north of the main house included a smokehouse, a brick-lined root cellar, and the wash house. The Lawrence Farmstead complex is representative of the evolution of domestic buildings from the 1870s to the late twentieth century on the North Texas plains and blackland prairie. S.D. Lawrence married his second wife, Louisa Hill Walker (1867-1948), in 1893, and they reared their eight children here. Members of the prominent Lawrence family lived on the land until 1995, when 13.7 acres including the family complex became a city historical park according to the wishes of one of Stephen and Louisa's daughters. (1998)

Mesquite Cemetery Marker (400 Holley Park Dr.) - Texas Site Marker: This burial ground was in use well before the Texas and Pacific Railroad established the City of Mesquite in 1873. The earliest marked grave is that of Britanna Santifee Chapman (1856-1859) who shares a plot with pioneer residents Davis G. Chapman (1824-1881) and wife Nancy C. (1828-1912). In 1890, local builder and civic leader Louis C. Ebrite (1852-1943) plotted a tract of several acres in a grid pattern with driveways that define the layout of the cemetery to this day. The site was formally deeded for cemetery use in 1892 and continues to honor area veterans and to chronicle the generations that belong to Mesquites proud heritage. (2001)

Motley Cemetery (3737 Motley Drive)- Texas Site Marker: Zachariah Motley migrated to Texas (1856) from Kentucky with his family and slaves. He and his wife Mary, five sons and three daughters helped settle this area and built their home some 200' Northeast of this site, a one-half acre portion of the original homestead bought from the Crittenden Survey. Earliest known burial (1863) was Penelope Motley McLain, a daughter, and the wife of Capt. J.B. McLain. The plot is still in use and is owned and

cared for by Motley descendants. Twenty-five known graves included family members and their slaves. (1976)

Potter Cemetery (5841 Lumley Road) - Texas Site Marker: John P. (1827-1899) and Martha (Oden) (1835-1872) Potter, pioneer citizens of the Republic of Texas, bought a farm near the Haught's Store community in 1860. When their son William L. Potter died in July 1861 he was the first to be buried on this site; John Potter enlisted in the Confederate Army in the same month. After the war he served as Justice of the Peace; his landholdings included almost 1,000 acres. Most of the Potters' nine children are interred here. The last recorded burial was in 1947. A 1997 count revealed 16 possible graves. The Potter Cemetery remains a record of the settlers who shaped Eastern Dallas County. (1998) Designated a Historic Texas Cemetery, 2005.

Public Education in Mesquite (300 E. Davis Street) - Texas Site Marker: Founded in 1885, the Mesquite Community School served until the first building of the newly formed Mesquite Independent School District was completed on this site in 1902, beginning with 200 students. Through strong community support, a high school was erected in 1923 and accredited in 1924. In the late 1930s a new high school was completed and the George W. Carver School was opened for area African American Students. The district was integrated in 1964. More buildings were acquired as needed. With an enrollment of 3,000 in 1997, Mesquite High School remains a focal point of public education in the area. (1998)

First Presbyterian Church of Mesquite (1028 South Beltline Road) – Texas Site Marker: In 1881, fifteen area residents organized the Mesquite Presbyterian Church. These charter members originally worshipped in a home where the Rev. George L. Blewett, a noted circuit riding preacher, held services. The congregation completed their first church building in 1885 near the corner of Ebrite and Davis streets. In 1918, to accommodate church growth, members built a new sanctuary, replacing the first structure on the same site. In 1927, the church changed names, becoming First Presbyterian Church of Mesquite. The congregation has been active in the community since its early years. A number of members have also served as community leaders. Joseph Columbus (J.C.) Rugel, a school teacher and one of the church's founders, became a representative to the state legislature in 1886 and served one term as mayor of mesquite (1900-1904). He and farmer John L. Hanby are two former members for whom local elementary schools are named. Robert Snead (R.S.) Kimbrough, another member, also served as a representative in the state legislature. Additionally, he started The Little Mesquiter, a local newspaper later known as The Mesquite News. Kimbrough's wife, Jennie (Curtis), was active in the community and church as well. The congregation has also worked with individuals outside of the area, placing a priority on supporting worldwide missions work. In 1958, the congregation moved to a new building on belt line road. Since that time, church membership has continued to grow. Today, First Presbyterian Church maintains its role as a leading voice for the Christian faith in Mesquite. (2009)

Holley-McWhorter-Greenhaw Family (105 S. Broad St.) - Texas Site Marker: Three generations of a Mesquite family made important contributions to the city's commerce, schools and fine arts. Tennessee native Nathaniel A. Holley (1861-1947) came to the area in 1884, farming 40 acres near Balch Springs and raising sugar cane, vegetables and orchard fruits. After a year, he returned to Tennessee to care for his widowed mother, then came back to Mesquite intending to open a grocery store. Holley purchased a lot on the town square, but his commercial plans were delayed by the deaths of his wife and son. Holley and his second wife, Adell Humphreys, had four children, and in 1903 he opened his store with stock hauled from Dallas and loaded in a wagon and a buggy. Holley also started a family tradition of civic involvement, serving a term as city alderman and seven school years as a board member. Nathaniel and Adell's two sons, Raymond and Anson, served in the military in World War I, and upon their return from France joined the family business. Youngest daughter Eula married Ferd Arthur McWhorter, who in 1943 expanded the family business along Broad Street. The retail operation named McWhorter's (later McWhorter-Greenhaw) included hardware, farm supplies, furniture and appliances. Ferd continued the family commitment to education, serving 11 years on the school board. Ferd and Eula's daughter Patricia

married musician and educator Frank Greenhaw, who joined the family enterprise and was school board member and president, school choral and band director, and director of music for First Methodist Church of Mesquite. Through their long-running business and in the names of a street, a school and a city park, Mesquite remembers the Holley, McWhorter and Greenhaw families. (2008)

NEARBY COMMUNITIES.

Galloways' Old Home Place (Sunnyvale)-Recorded Texas Historic Landmark: Recorded Texas Historical Landmark: Farmhouse of Confederate Veteran Benjamin Franklin Galloway (1833-1912) and wife Eliza (Fletcher), who came from Tennessee. They built first three rooms, 1875-76; Galloway enlarged house, 1888. Fourth generation of the family now preserves home. (1973)

La Prada Drive Church of Christ (2427 La Prada Dr., Dallas)- Texas site marker: This congregation first met in members' homes at the end of the 19th century. In 1907 three trustees of the church- Chester Williams, G.M. Purcell, and Claude Hocker- purchased property near what would become Fair Park. An existing white frame building was used for 47 years, with the name of the church changing in accordance with street name changes. Members helped form the Ewing Avenue Church of Christ in Oak Cliff in 1949. Moving to a new site on Bruton Road in 1954, the congregation contributed their money, time, and talents to construct a red brick sanctuary, which served for many years. By the 1970s many members had moved to the Northeast Dallas suburbs. In 1976 Elders purchased more than four acres of land on La Prada Drive. Due to the rapid sale of the Bruton Road facility, services were held in a Mesquite school until a new church building was completed in December 1979. In keeping with the traditions of its founders, the church is guided by Elders and Deacons; male members do all speaking and teaching. There is no Sunday school. Singing without instruments is practiced. The congregation is active in foreign and domestic missionary service and community outreach. (1998)

First Baptist Church of Sunnyvale (3018 Belt Line Rd., Sunnyvale) – Texas Site Marker: On July 3, 1904, New Hope Baptist Church chartered with thirteen members under the direction of Dr. James B. Gambrell, who was associated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the First Baptist Church of Dallas. The Rev. S.W. Kendrick served as the first pastor, with services held once a month. In 1907, members dedicated their first sanctuary, located northwest of this site. The church grew, and in 1953, New Hope residents joined with other nearby communities to incorporate as the City of Sunnyvale. The church's name changed in 1966 to reflect its place in the community. In 1978, the church moved to this site, where it continues to expand its programs and facilities. (2005)

Long Creek Cemetery (500 Long Creek Rd., Sunnyvale) – Historic Texas Cemetery: Capt. A. Webb, veteran of the Black Hawk War in Illinois, established a homestead near here as part of the Mercer Colony in the mid 19th century. He was joined later by father-in-law and War of 1812 veteran Benjamin Crownover and his family. In 1855, Crownover's daughter Leona Caldwell was the first laid to rest in this field beneath a pecan tree. Capt. Webb later deeded a tract of land to area residents as the site of a school, church, and public burial ground. His donation and that of W.H. Caldwell formed the center of long Creek community. The Long Creek Cemetery is a link to generations of area families. Burials include many military veterans, ministers, teachers and members of the Mason, Eastern Star and Woodmen of the World organizations. Stones and landscaping at the cemetery represent a broad spectrum of funereal practices from the 19th century to the present, and today, an association formed in 1910 maintains the burial ground. (2005)

Tripp Baptist Church (401 E. Tripp Rd., Sunnyvale) – Texas Site Marker: Pioneers arrived in this area as early as 1845, establishing small settlements that developed over time into the Tripp, Long Creek, Hatterville and New Hope communities. By 1882, Tripp residents attended church services in the local schoolhouse. C.J. Washmon, who owned a local grocery store, served as an early pastor for what became Tripp Baptist Church. In 1906, the congregation began collecting donations to build a new

sanctuary, and in 1916 Kaufman County resident, Richard Linn, donated the property. The building, dedicated in 1918, was also used by the local Assembly of God congregation. In 1954, the Baptists remodeled the original white frame structure, adding a brick façade as well as three classrooms, a pastor's study and a nursery. Later additions included a bell tower. Early church activities included summer revivals held under brush arbors, often in conjunction with other churches, and baptisms conducted in area creeks, ponds and cotton gin tanks. Over the years, congregation members have also participated in dinners, Christmas nativities, and educational programs, and the church has regularly contributed to home, state and foreign missions, and continued in service to its members and its community. In the 1950s, Tripp consolidated with the neighboring towns of Long Creek, Hatterville, and New Hope to form the city of Sunnyvale. For decades, the communities had shared resources, including the Long Creek Cemetery, where many church members are buried. Today, the history of Sunnyvale is comprised of the stories from each community, including the long-standing institution that is Tripp Baptist Church. (2005)