

## ABSTRACT

### “What’s Good for Business is Good for the City”: Interpreting Dallas and the Railroad Connection

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In recent years, historic house museums have experienced a decrease in visitorship. In order for these institutions to survive, measures need to be taken to revamp their interpretive plans. The purpose of this project is to aid Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park reinterpret the on-site railroad depot in accordance with their new interpretive plan “All Roads Lead to Dallas.” In this sense, “road” refers not only to literal transportation routes and railways, but also passages for new ideas and attitudes. In undertaking this project, research will be conducted in order to gain historical evidence for changes to be made to buildings in accordance with the new theme. The second phase of this project is to aid in the preliminary planning of the exhibit including creating a conceptual preliminary design of the railroad depot.

"What's Good for Business is Good for the City": Interpreting Dallas and the Railroad  
Connection

by

Alyssa Taylor Steed, B.A.

A Project

Approved by the Department of Museum Studies

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Kenneth C. Hafertepe, Ph.D, Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Arts

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Waco, Texas

May 2011

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DHV Dallas Heritage Village

HNE Historic New England

H&TC Houston and Texas Central Railroad

T&P Texas and Pacific Railroad



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the support and input of many. I owe much gratitude to my committee chairperson Dr. Kenneth Hafertepe who patiently guided me in the unknown waters of historical research, and who kindly reminded what a literature review is (and what it is not). Also to those serving on my committee—Dr. Julie Holcomb, Dr. Ellie Caston, Dr. Michael Parrish, and Gary Smith—thank you for tirelessly reading my many drafts and providing your much-valued feedback, you might recognize some of our conversations in these pages. To Dr. Evelyn Montgomery, curator of collections and exhibits at Dallas Heritage Village, thank you for opening the door to your curious little office on Park Avenue and allowing me free rein on this project. Also I thank you for patiently meeting with me through times of great stress (busted pipes for you and primary resources for me).

Many thanks to my roomie, Lisa Simpson for listening to my rants and raves, and for much needed hours of TV procrastination. Also to my Spring Break Bunch, and all of my cohort for their support and friendship.

Lastly, but by no means least, I would like to thank my family. Thank you Aunt Cathy and Uncle Doug for sheltering me in your home these past two years—I owe you 500 more cookies, and at least one more wedding cake! And to my parents who always, always supported me in all that I did or ever wanted to do—this is the effect of all those “tourts”.

## DEDICATION

For my parents.

## PROLOGUE

The recent financial crisis has caused many industries across the board to cut staff in order to balance the budget. Museums are not immune to this trend, and a specific subset of museums, the historic house and history institutions in general, find themselves in more dire straights than others. Attendance of these types of institutions has been declining steadily for the past twenty-five to thirty years, and this latest recession has found much needed funding from cultural foundations and governmental assistance cut. Some have even been forced to shut their doors for good. In order to ensure the sustainability of history and historic house museums, museum professionals need to take action and update their institutions in accordance with modern visitors' expectations. One new solution that many history museums are incorporating into their exhibits is making their historic spaces and exhibits more interactive with their visitors.

Dallas Heritage Village (DHV) is a historic house village located in downtown Dallas that houses more than thirty historic structures on its grounds. Inspired by the new shift towards interaction in museums, staff at Dallas Heritage Village decided to update the village's exhibits and historical spaces to make living history a more modern and interactive experience. The decision was made in response to visitor's changing expectations over time and the understanding of different learning styles. This aim of this project was to develop a new interactive

interpretive scheme for the Katy railroad depot at Dallas Heritage Village.

Preliminary research was conducted to determine the focus of the new interpretation of the depot. The research was then condensed into an easily understandable format for museum visitors. A floor plan detailing the specific placement of interactive components and label text was developed so that DHV staff may easily implement the scheme.

In order to connect this project with wider trends in the field, a discussion of the origins of historic house museums, some of the problems they are facing, and various solutions historic organizations are implementing to save their historic structures. The focus will then shift to the research collected about the difference between life in Dallas before and after the construction of the railroad. The evolution of cultural institutions in Dallas, emphasizing Dallas Heritage Village will be discussed, and a complete outline will be given of the project. Finally, the new interpretive scheme will be detailed, complete with floor and wall elevations, and detailed descriptions of the interactive components.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

### Museum History

The origin of the historic house village lies in the field of historic preservation. This movement began in Europe in 1795 when the French opened the Musée des Monuments Français, an institution dedicated to the collection and display of architectural and sculptural pieces confiscated from churches and palaces during the French Revolution. These artifacts were placed in rooms dedicated to each century in an attempt to remind the visitor of the greatness of the French empire.<sup>1</sup>

Established in 1830, the French service of Monuments Historique was a government-led initiative whose purpose was to inventory and classify historic monuments. Criteria for inclusion were such that buildings needed to be of historic or aesthetic importance. When these criteria were met, the buildings were placed under protection of the government and could not be destroyed or modified externally.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edward P Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* (Walnut Creek, London, New Delhi: AltaMira Press in cooperation with American Association for State and Local History, 1996), 83.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The American tradition of historic preservation was focused less on ancient churches or palaces, of which America had few, and more on patriotic attitudes and a “love of country.”<sup>3</sup> Historic preservation in this country led to the creation of the historic house museum and later the historic house village. The first historic house museum was Hasbrouck house, of which the committee for its preservation argued that no traveler would “hesitate to make a pilgrimage to this beautiful spot....And if he have an American heart in his bosom, he will feel himself to be a better man; his patriotism will kindle with deeper emotion, his aspirations for his country’s good will ascend from a more devout mind, for having visited.”<sup>4</sup>

There exists no greater icon for patriotism and preservation than Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association of the Union. Chartered in 1856, this all female society began the drive to save and preserve George Washington’s Virginia plantation home, Mount Vernon, in the state in which he left it.<sup>5</sup> Miss Cunningham’s desire to preserve the home of the father of the United States of America stemmed from the political tension evident in pre-Civil War America, and she wished to establish a shrine where “the mothers of the land and their innocent children might make their offering in the cause of greatness,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Donna Ann Harris, *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*, American Association for State and Local History Book Series (Lanham, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2007), 7.

goodness, and prosperity of their country.”<sup>6</sup> This model of saving the home of an historic figure, rather than creating a gallery shrine with statues, or demolishing the structure for a new monument set the precedent for the preservation of historic houses to come.<sup>7</sup> The patriotic impetus for preservation inspired other societies to form and preserve homes of other historic figures, such as Andrew Jackson’s home The Hermitage, George Mason’s Gunston Hall, and Valley Forge in Pennsylvania.

Historic Preservation transitioned into an intellectual medium when William Sumner Appleton founded the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (now Historic New England) in 1910.<sup>8</sup> Appleton focused on the architectural and aesthetic elements of buildings rather than on historic events or people.<sup>9</sup> His emphasis on the built environment as its own aesthetic cemented him as the nation’s first professional preservationist.<sup>10</sup>

Outdoor museums with collections of houses were first founded in Stockholm in the 1870s as a response to the Industrial Revolution and the loss of

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<sup>6</sup> Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 89.

<sup>7</sup> Patrick H. Butler III, “Past, Present, and Future,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>8</sup> “Our Founder: Introducing William Sumner Appleton — Centennial,” <http://centennial.historicnewengland.org/about-us/introducing-william-sumner-appleton> (accessed November 6, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 90.

<sup>10</sup> “Our Founder: Introducing William Sumner Appleton — Centennial.”

cultural building and living traditions.<sup>11</sup> In the United States the best-known and most prosperous outdoor museum is Colonial Williamsburg. Founded in 1926 with the help and financial backing of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Colonial Williamsburg set the standards for complex and in-depth research in the field. Teams of historians, architects, archaeologists, and scientists created an impressive interpretive program that was truer to the past than anything that had come before it.<sup>12</sup>

Greenfield Village at Dearborn, Michigan was the first instance in the United States of moving historical structures into a concentrated area and creating a space that had theretofore never existed. Founder Henry Ford thought that history and historians placed too much focus on wars and politics and was interested in the way that Americans had lived their lives day-to-day. In modern times, creating historic villages incorporates research in order to create an accurate portrayal of an “authentic, historically justifiable community” even if the context is artificial.<sup>13</sup> Patriotism launched by state and local centennials, and the upcoming national bicentennial, caused the rapid growth of historic houses in the 1960s and 70s. Many communities worked to turn their historic structures into museums for tourists.<sup>14</sup> Currently many of these institutions find themselves in financial straits.

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<sup>11</sup> Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 84.

<sup>12</sup> Butler III, “Past, Present, and Future,” 27.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 93.

<sup>14</sup> Harris, *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*, 7.



## Historic House Museums in Crisis

There obviously exists an inherent human need to preserve our history and the associated sites, but in recent years it has become obvious that visitor interest and dollars have been waning. Competition for museum visitors is fierce between theme parks, video games, and movies that some visitors feel offer more opportunities to interact as a family.<sup>15</sup> The financial facet of this problem may seem intuitive in today's economic climate; all industries are facing challenges. The soft market combined with the decline of the stock market led to a decrease in tax revenue that in turn led to a decrease in government coffers, as well as a decrease in consumer spending.<sup>16</sup>

David Darlington, assistant editor of the American Historical Association, writes that this is "the perfect storm—cutbacks in state funding, falling endowment returns, and a decline in corporate, individual, and foundation giving."<sup>17</sup> As the recession continues, a growing number of institutions are closing their doors for good. James Vaughan, vice president of stewardship of historic sites at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, states, "There is a general feeling in the field that in

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<sup>15</sup> Cary Carson, "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?," *The Public Historian* 30, no. 4 (November 2008): 4.

<sup>16</sup> Frank Shafroth, David M. Darlington, and Jack Nokes, "Deep Cuts: The Crisis in State Funding," *Museum News* July/August (2003), [http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/MN\\_JA03\\_DeepCuts.cfm](http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/MN_JA03_DeepCuts.cfm) (accessed October 10, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

this economy, there are going to be some historic house museums that are no longer viable.”<sup>18</sup>

The causes for this crisis seem to be varied. Cary Carson, former vice president of the research division at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, cites that there exists no national organization that keeps records of museum attendance which fuels the perception that attendance at history museums has plummeted in the last decade. A recent survey done by a marketing research firm serving the museum field found that history museums were ranked last (eighth out of eight groups) with family audiences.<sup>19</sup>

Large museums are not immune to these problems. Institutions such as Colonial Williamsburg, Mount Vernon, and Old Sturbridge Village have become known as dinosaurs because of their resistance to change and proclivity to become extinct. The response to this crisis has been to reduce staff and programming- to apply pressure to the wound to keep from bleeding out.<sup>20</sup> Another contributing factor to the growing list of problems that historic houses face is the high cost associated with maintaining a historic structure.<sup>21</sup> Old buildings are expensive to

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<sup>18</sup> Amy Rogers Nazarov, “Death With Dignity,” *Museum News* July/August (2009), <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/dwdignity.cfm> (accessed October 10, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Carson, “The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?,” 11.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>21</sup> Linda Norris, “The Uncataloged Museum: Are County Historical Societies Dinosaurs?,” <http://uncatalogedmuseum.blogspot.com/2010/09/are-county-historical-societies.html> (accessed October 10, 2010).

sustain; roofs need repairing and peeling paint needs a fresh coat, but these commonplace issues do not inspire donors to take out their checkbooks.

Many museum professionals have cited the inertia of the profession as a contributing factor to decreased visitorship; as one scholar claims “museums receive dangerously automatic acceptance....museum men too rarely encourage dissent...They say ‘don’t rock the boat,’ forgetting that one of the characteristics of a moving boat is that it rocks occasionally.”<sup>22</sup> Changes in protocol are small and when they do come are usually just small enough to fix short-term rather than long-term problems.<sup>23</sup> This resistance or inability to change is especially common in small museums, or in volunteer organizations.<sup>24</sup>

In a recent visit with a curator at an historic house run by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, a comment was made that the volunteers that had been at the site the longest were the most resistant to change. When it was pointed out to them that their period clothing was historically inaccurate to the site, they did not take the recommendations of the professional staff and continued to dress in a manner more suited to two decades before the era of interpretation. On the one hand it speaks well of the institution that it attracts such a committed volunteer force, but it inevitably harms the integrity of the site when improvements cannot be made.

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<sup>22</sup> David Julian Hodges, “Museums, Anthropology, and Minorities: In Search of a New Relevance for Old Artifacts,” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 148.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Norris, “The Uncataloged Museum: Are County Historical Societies Dinosaurs?.”

Another facet of the current crisis in historic museums comes in the form of competition. Competition is not entirely from outside industries, the over-proliferation of museums is also a contributing factor. It has been estimated that over one-half of American museums have been opened since 1960.<sup>25</sup> The bicentennial fervor that swept the nation in the 1970s has left its mark on the modern institution. The Novato History Museum founded in the 1970s is now struggling with life in the “post-founder” era. The director is currently having to rally the board and reinforce the fundraising aspect of their positions. She says that “slowly, with some board turnover, people realize that there are fund-raising responsibilities-that it’s not just a social club.”<sup>26</sup> It is unknown the exact number of historic house museums that exist, all because of that lack of institutional records on museum attendance.<sup>27</sup> Lack of data invariably leads to guesswork to figure out the sources and solutions to the problems faced by historic house museums today.

### New Solutions

Ensuring sustainability of these struggling institutions means that new solutions need to be implemented some of them drastic. Mergers, sales, leases, and new uses or a change in ownership of a historic house may eliminate the need for a museum, but make preservation of the historic property possible. In her book *New*

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<sup>25</sup> Harold Skramstad, “An Agenda for American Museums in the Twenty-First Century,” *Daedalus* 128, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 117.

<sup>26</sup> Ron Chew, “In Praise of the Small Museum,” *Museum News* March/April (2002), [http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/MN\\_MA02\\_SmallMuseums.cfm](http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/MN_MA02_SmallMuseums.cfm) (accessed October 10, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Carson, “The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?,” 12.

*Solutions for House Museums*, Donna Ann Harris outlines possible solutions for historic house museums.<sup>28</sup> Of the eight solutions proposed, five require that the museum retain ownership of the historic building. These include creation of a study house (using the house to study a particular architectural style), using the building for mission-related but non-interpretive use, entering into a cooperative arrangement with another house museum organization, and a long-term lease agreement for adaptive use to a for-profit entity. Harris also suggests the possibility of selling to a private owner or other nonprofit entity with protective easements, which transfers ownership of the house from the museum to an outside entity.<sup>29</sup>

Historic New England (HNE) is an example of an institution that has utilized one of their houses as a study house. Study houses at HNE are the houses that were unpopular with visitors and that never had strong visitation; these houses now serve as models to illustrate American architecture.<sup>30</sup> The Nantucket Historical Association, founded in 1894 by preservation-minded women, began facing significant stewardship problems in the 2000s. Arie Kopelman, president of the board said, "We're rich in properties...we accepted properties with no way to take care of them."<sup>31</sup> Therefore, a new interpretive plan was devised that took into account all properties of the association and singled out those that did not fit into

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<sup>28</sup> Harris, *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 82-96.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 108.

mission-defined categories. In order to decrease maintenance costs as an operating museum, one of these houses, the 1800 House, was restored and converted into the association's center for lifelong learning, and preservation restrictions were placed on the property. This structure, though used for mission-related activities, no longer operates as a museum.<sup>32</sup> The Robert E. Lee Boyhood Home in Alexandria, Va., is now a privately owned former house museum. James Vaughn, vice president for stewardship for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, hopes that privately owned historic houses such as this one will one day be reopened for public use.<sup>33</sup>

In 2008, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in partnership with the American Association for Museums, the American Association for State and Local History, and the American Architectural Foundation hosted The Kykuit Conference at Kykuit, the John D. Rockefeller estate in Mount Pleasant, New York. The theme of the conference was "The Stewardship of Historic Sites," with the purpose to have a frank discussion about how to ensure sustainability and high standards of stewardship in the face of the crisis facing historic sites.<sup>34</sup>

James Vaughn attests that historic houses are different than other types of museums. In other museums objects are enclosed behind glass cases with

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>33</sup> Rogers Nazarov, "Death With Dignity."

<sup>34</sup> James Vaughn, "Rethinking the Rembrandt Rule," *Museum*, no. March/April (2008), <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/rembrandtrule.cfm> (accessed October 10, 2010).

temperature controls, and people come to look at the objects on display. In an historic house, the objective is more immersive. Objects behind panes of glass do not effectively evoke the setting of life in a different era and clash with the interpretive goal of the site. Oftentimes artifacts of differing values are mixed with artifacts with differing needs. Vaughn hypothesizes that new solutions to these problems are to “rethink the Rembrandt rule,”<sup>35</sup> that canon which advises that every object be treated like a Rembrandt painting.

A tiered approach to collections, classifying objects in terms of value and institutional significance, could reduce budgetary strain and streamline the operation. Appropriating rooms and objects as “for-use” or “limited-use” allows for visitor interaction with the site, and better suits the visitor’s needs. Historic sites also have a tendency to focus on object-related interpretation (painstakingly researched period rooms complete with velvet ropes and Plexiglas partitions) when they need to shift to visitor-based interpretive programs. Finally, many historic sites are burdened with thousands of artifacts that don’t fit the mission, or are far too damaged to be saved. By simplifying deaccessioning procedures sites can eliminate problem collections and free up space and time for the truly significant artifacts.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to more drastic measures, other museums are trying to become more relevant with visitors by tapping into the electronic market. In 2002 a project was undertaken at Filoli, a National Trust for Historic Preservation property and

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

house museum, to introduce digital guidebooks to improve visitor interaction with the site.<sup>37</sup> This particular guidebook, deemed *Sotto Voce*, was designed to promote a shared visitor experience. The device is a handheld computer with a touch screen display where visitors tap on objects to hear blurbs about them.<sup>38</sup> To enhance interaction between visitors, a feature referred to as eavesdropping allows visitors to listen in to audio clips that their companions are listening to so that there is a shared component among groups of visitors. The audio clips are structured in such a way as to promote social interaction in the museum about the exhibited material. When surveyed about the product, visitors responded that they enjoyed the shared listening capabilities, and that it started conversations among them.<sup>39</sup>

Still other leaders in the field suggest that so-called “Plan A” (income generated from gate receipts, ticket sales, and healthy attendance numbers) has failed, and that a “Plan B” must be put into action. Cary Carson maintains that historic sites need to be able to make effective connections between the visitor and the story they are telling. In order to achieve this goal, it is essential to remember that today’s learners organize and process information differently than thirty years ago. Visitors no longer want to be passive observers; they crave to be immersed in

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<sup>37</sup> Rebecca E. Grinter, Paul M. Aoki, Amy Hurst\*, Margaret H. Szymanski, James D. Thornton, and Allison Woodruff, “Revisiting the Visit: Understanding How Technology Can Shape the Museum Visit:” 2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 8.



their surroundings in order to learn about them.<sup>40</sup> The most engaging narratives are human-interest stories, and successful interpretive plans will be productions that tell a serial story and bring the viewer into the action.<sup>41</sup>

Another component to ensure that visitors' expectations are met is the study of different learning styles, and attempting to incorporate these into an interpretive plan. Much research has been conducted to study learning behaviors in museums. There are two extremes in the way material is presented to the visitor: the behavioralist and developmentalist theories of learning. The behavioralist theories suggest that learning is incremental and done in small pieces over time; while developmentalist theories suggest that learning is constructed in the mind of the learner, meaning learning "is a transformation of mental structures in which the learner plays an active role, making sense of the phenomena presented to the mind."<sup>42</sup> Behavioralist theories include didactic, expository education (traditional school-associated methods of learning) and stimulus-response education. Stimulus-response education differs from the didactic, expository in that mastery of a body of material to be memorized bit-by-bit is not emphasized. Instead, in stimulus-response education a reward is given for appropriate behavior and correct answers.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Carson, "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?," 25.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>42</sup> George E. Hein and Mary Alexander, *Museums: Places of Learning* (American Association of Museums, Education Committee, 1998), 32.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 33.

Developmentalist theories of learning include discovery education and constructivism, both of which shift the focus from the material to the learner. Discovery learning involves trial-and-error; if we want a visitor to learn about gravity we encourage them to drop a ball and observe the outcome. Constructivism is hands-on learning that stresses that conclusions drawn by the learner “are not validated by outside standards of truth but only within the experience of the learner.”<sup>44</sup>

Howard Gardner proposed that there were multiple intelligences which people employ to learn and process information. These seven intelligences consist of: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.<sup>45</sup> These are not exclusive and one person may express many of these at the same time, and may change depending on a person’s age or mood. For example, younger children will tend to prefer kinesthetic learning, which may change as they grow.

Research has also been done on what different types of museum visitors prefer. Families follow their own agendas in museums, and social interaction is emphasized more than structured learning in a museum visit.<sup>46</sup> Successful museum exhibits that facilitate family groups include the following characteristics: multi-sided to allow for members of the family to cluster around an object at the same

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>45</sup> Howard Gardner, “Learning Styles: Renaissance South East,” [http://www.museumse.org.uk/ABC\\_working\\_with\\_schools/museums\\_schools\\_and\\_learning/learning\\_styles.html](http://www.museumse.org.uk/ABC_working_with_schools/museums_schools_and_learning/learning_styles.html) (accessed February 24, 2011).

<sup>46</sup> Hein and Alexander, *Museums: Places of Learning*, 22.

time, multi-user, accessible to both adults and small children, multi-outcome (interaction to foster discussion within the group), multi-modal to accommodate different learning theories and styles, easily understood segments, and is relevant.<sup>47</sup>

School groups are another studied demographic, and research suggests that school visits to museums have a lasting effect on the student that often results in return visits during childhood or during adulthood when bringing their own children. A significant learning opportunity valued by teachers and school administration is offered from being exposed to and taught by the actual artifacts of a museum.<sup>48</sup>

The fact that different people learn in different ways, or that people of different age or social groups learn differently from one day to the next is a contributing factor to the changing face of museums. Nina Simon, proponent of the participatory museum, theorizes that museums are public spaces that offer unique and worthwhile experiences only when they find ways to interact with their public.<sup>49</sup>

Additionally, museums must conduct ongoing research on the subject matter covered by the museum. This serves to keep the museum fresh and relevant, and demonstrates to the visitor that the institution is a trustworthy source of educational material, and steward of their collection. The next chapter will highlight the research done on Dallas and the railroad to be included in the reinterpretation of the railroad depot at Dallas Heritage Village.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Nina Simon, "Museum 2.0," *Museum 2.0*, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/> (accessed February 24, 2011).

## CHAPTER TWO

Historic house museums are facing significant hardships, but there are solutions to these problems. Dallas Heritage Village has made the decision to reinvent their interpretive spaces to cater to different learning styles and family groups. The focus of the interpretive scheme in the railroad depot is how the arrival of the railroad changed everyday life in Dallas. The following research will be featured in the exhibit panels in the new exhibit.

### Dallas and the Railroad Connection

Dallas, now synonymous with commerce, cowboy hats, culture, money, and mythical feuding families began the way many cities do, as a small town that contained the correct formula combining location, luck, industriousness, and not a small share of shady dealings. The name originated from a number of possible sources: George Mifflin Dallas, vice president of the United States from 1845-49; Commodore Alexander J. Dallas, his brother; or Joseph Dallas who settled near the town in 1843. Regardless of its namesake, Dallas developed from a small Texas frontier town into a large metropolis that afforded its citizens with the finest money could buy, and the agent of dramatic change was the railroad.

## Before the Railroad

Before Dallas was Dallas, its land was marked only by the small river known as Three Forks, sometimes referred to as Three Forks of the Trinity from as early as the mid-eighteenth century. In 1690, Spanish conquistador Alonso de Leon named it the Trinity River, and the name remained in use. The lowest point of the river created a natural crossing place that Native Americans traversed on their east-west trade routes for centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike other rivers and bodies of water that supported commerce and trade, the Trinity River was not easily navigable by boat, canoe or steam barge. Attempts were made to remove sand bars and snags found along the river, but these changes made little difference, and although Job Boat No. 1 reached Dallas in a year and four days after departing from Galveston, the dream of a navigable river was never realized.<sup>2</sup> Some of the most prolific navigators of the area around Dallas were French although the area was under the Spanish flag. French trader Louis Juchereau de St. Denis and his wife, the mythically beautiful Emmanuelle, occasionally set up camp near the Trinity during their trading treks through Texas.<sup>3</sup> Other French, Spanish, and Anglo settlers traveled through this area on their ways to other locales,

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<sup>1</sup> Rose Biderman, *They Came to Stay: The Story of the Jews in Dallas, 1870-1977* (Austin: Eakin Press, 2002), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Gard, "TRINITY RIVER | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/rnt02> (accessed January 29, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> William McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925* (The Dallas Historical Society, Dallas, Texas, 1978), 2.

with none opting to stay and settle in this particular area of the Blackland Prairie in the midst of Native American territory.

In 1841 a grant was given to a Kentucky group of investors, The Texas Agricultural, Commercial, and Manufacturing Company to settle non-Texas families in an area that eventually extended from the Red River to 160 miles west of modern-day Dallas County.<sup>4</sup> This colony was known as Peters Colony, named after primary British investor William S. Peters. The original contract stated that the impresarios would bring 200 families in three years and provide gunpowder, shot, and seed to each of the families; in some cases cabins were built for the incoming families. Insufficient land caused the contract to be expanded by both acreage and population, and the number of families was increased from 200 to 800.<sup>5</sup>

The colony never achieved great harmony, and in 1852 settlers revolted against the company and strove to drive out the company agent. In the end, the incorporators made little money off of their investment, but the Peters Colony did have a lasting effect on Dallas. Settlers rushed to the area for free land, and many stayed and became important and influential citizens of the fledgling town. The Peters Colony was advertised in Europe and the eastern United States, and as such these advertisements raised the profile of the Three Forks area of the Trinity River.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>5</sup> Harry Wade, "PETERS COLONY | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/uep02> (accessed January 30, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 3.

Perhaps most significant was that this contract with the Republic of Texas established Texas, Dallas included, as a land-rich nation. Land was the first commodity that Dallas had, and it was for the land that people came and settled.<sup>7</sup>

As the Peters Colony was establishing its contract with the Republic of Texas, John Neely Bryan was making his way across Texas to a bluff that overlooked the Trinity River. Bryan was by turns a farmer, lawyer, trader, and adventurer, and was drawn to Texas in 1839 with the desire to establish a trading post for the purpose of exchanging goods with the Caddo tribes.<sup>8</sup> In November 1841, Bryan settled on the east bank of the Trinity River near the site of the natural crossing that had allowed natives, Spanish, French, and other travelers before him to traverse the river.<sup>9</sup> Bryan's location proved to be serendipitous as in less than four years his land was near the point of convergence for two major travel routes, the Preston Trail and the National Central Road.<sup>10</sup> While Bryan was in Arkansas settling his affairs for his permanent return to Texas, a skirmish between the Texas Rangers and the remaining Caddo peoples of the region forced the westward migration of the Caddo,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>9</sup> Harper Jr. Cecil, "BRYAN, JOHN NEELY | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbran> (accessed February 1, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Jackie McElhaney and Michael V. Hazel, "DALLAS, TX | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdd01> (accessed January 26, 2011).

thus rendering Bryan's dream of Dallas as a trading post ineffectual.<sup>11</sup> This occurrence did not discourage Bryan from returning to Texas however, and upon his return in 1841 he began to plan the city proper of Dallas, Texas.<sup>12</sup>

In 1854 a colony called La Reunion was founded just west of Dallas (in modern day Oak Cliff). It was begun by socialist European (French, Swiss, and Belgian) émigrés who wished to establish a utopian society on the wide-open plains of Texas. Composed of many well-educated members and craftsmen (among them milliners, dressmakers, watchmakers, poets, and jewelers) the colony suffered from a lack of practical knowledge about frontier life.<sup>13</sup> Storied accounts of the rich Texas farmland soon gave way to the reality of hard, clay-rich Blackland Prairie soil, and draughts and swarms of grasshoppers plagued the land. In addition to a general lack of agricultural knowledge, the leader of the colony Victor Considerant was more adept at planning and dreaming about a utopian society than actively overseeing the construction and running of one, and the experiment soon failed.<sup>14</sup> The citizens of La Reunion therefore moved to Dallas and brought their special skills with them, adding a cultural aspect that distinguished it from other frontier towns.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Biderman, *They Came to Stay: The Story of the Jews in Dallas, 1870-1977*, 6-7.

<sup>14</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 14.

<sup>15</sup> D.W. Meinig, *Imperial Texas, An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1975), 48.



The township of Dallas was small and growing slowly. In 1844 John Billingsly upon his arrival from Missouri proclaimed, "We soon reached the place we had heard of so often: but the town, where was it? Two small log cabins- this was the town of Dallas, and two families of 10 to 12 souls was its population."<sup>16</sup> The influx of people to buy plots from John Neely Bryan was painfully slow, with most newcomers echoing Billingsly's opinion. In August 1850 the residents of the newly appointed Dallas County voted on their county seat; the race was close, and a run-off election was called three weeks later. After the votes had been tallied Dallas eked out a victory with 244 votes over the 216 for Hord's Ridge. In 1856, the year of Dallas's official incorporation, its population was a scant 350 people most of whom were farmers. By the late 1850s the small town held clustered about its log courthouse: "five general stores, two hotels, two livery stables, two drugstores, two brick yards, two saddle shops, a steam sawmill, a carriage factory, a French tailor, a barber, a boot-and shoemaker, a tinner, a cabinetmaker, two mechanics, two blacksmiths, a milliner, a photographer, and an insurance agent."<sup>17</sup> In 1860, Paris was the largest town in Texas, while Dallas was "the most unusual"<sup>18</sup>, but the fact remained that North Texas had no city.

This was not to say that Dallas did not have trade or commerce at this time; it was the capital for the buffalo hide trade and leatherwork. However, it became

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<sup>16</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>18</sup> Meinig, *Imperial Texas, An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography*, 59.

apparent that the town would not continue on its path of upward mobility without reliable means of mass transportation.<sup>19</sup> The Trinity River was not navigable and the wagon trails of the American West were quickly being replaced by railroad tracks. John Neely Bryan held a public meeting in 1866 to establish the need for a railroad connection with the seacoast where disappointment was expressed at “the tardiness of the Houston & Texas Central railway in building its road, and the Southern Pacific Railway... heartily commended for its energy and enterprise.”<sup>20</sup>

#### What is Good for Business is Good for the City: Construction of the Railroad

Plans were being made by the state of Texas to extend the northern route of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad (H&TC) to the Red River, and every community along the way wanted the railroad to pass through their town-- Dallas included. In 1870 a representative from Dallas County was sent to the Texas Legislature to ensure the interests of the county and Dallas, that ever-hopeful city. It was there decided that the railway would pass through Dallas County and cross the Trinity in said county, assuming that the crossing point would be in Dallas.<sup>21</sup> Surveyors for the railroad chose a different route that placed the tracks going through a point eight miles east of the city of Dallas. Citizens were outraged at this

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<sup>19</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>21</sup> S.G. Reed, *A History of the Texas Railroads*, Second. (Houston, Texas: The St. Clair Publishing Co., 1941), 208-209.

sidestep of their clever maneuvering and banded together to raise \$5,000 in cash, 115 acres of land, and a right-of-way through the city in order to secure the road.<sup>22</sup>

On July 16, 1872 the H&TC wood-burning locomotive engine steamed into town after a fifteen-hour trip from Houston.<sup>23</sup> This grand occasion was heralded with a celebration in which 5,000 jubilant and cheering citizens greeted the train and her occupants.<sup>24</sup> The *Dallas Times Herald* remarked that “everyone was excited with the arrival of the first train and seemed to sense this event meant the start of growth and expansion of business. The weather was ideal for the great day with clear skies and gentle breeze as a hard rain the day before had settled the dust and cooled the air. The event was celebrated at the Crutchfield Hotel with music, oratory, and a huge buffalo barbeque for all.”<sup>25</sup>

The H&TC line secured rail travel from the north and south, but there was soon an opportunity for Dallas to become host to a Texas and Pacific (T&P) line running east to west. The T&P was chartered to run near the thirty-second parallel from Shreveport to San Diego and would eventually have to cross the H&TC at some point. The thirty-second parallel however, ran some fifty miles south of Dallas.<sup>26</sup> To ensure that Dallas was the point at which the two crossed, John Lane of the *Dallas*

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>23</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Biderman, *They Came to Stay: The Story of the Jews in Dallas, 1870-1977*, 14.

<sup>25</sup> “Dallas Times Herald,” August 23, 1949, 2-B.

<sup>26</sup> Biderman, *They Came to Stay: The Story of the Jews in Dallas, 1870-1977*, 15.

*Herald*, Dallas' representative in the legislature, attached an amendment to the agreement between the State of Texas and the T&P mandating that the railroad would have to cross with the H&TC within one mile of Browder Springs. This amendment was passed regardless of the probability that neither legislators nor T&P officials knew the precise location of Browder Springs.<sup>27</sup> The agreement on the ratification was perhaps due to its ratification at the end of the legislative session when the legislators were looking forward to going home.<sup>28</sup> Browder Springs, as it happened, was located near downtown Dallas and was the water supply for the city.

As legend goes, when T&P officials found out about the deception, they chose to bypass Dallas and build south of Browder Springs out of spite. In order to mollify the railroad company, a committee secured a \$100,000 bond issue from Dallas business leaders and supplied a broad right-of-way. In August 1873 the T&P rolled into Dallas pulled by a team of oxen. An economic panic had swept the nation earlier that year, and the effects were felt for months after. The crisis actually helped Dallas, halting further construction of the T&P and thus insuring Dallas as the terminus for the T&P east-west route for many years.<sup>29</sup>

The crossing of the two railroads was heralded as the force that would turn Dallas into the "Metropolis of Texas."<sup>30</sup> Suddenly Dallas went from a small agrarian

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 19.

<sup>29</sup> Biderman, *They Came to Stay: The Story of the Jews in Dallas, 1870-1977*, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Reed, *A History of the Texas Railroads*, 209.

town to a hub of transportation from North, East, South, and West. Her population exploded-from 3,000 in 1870 to 10,000 in 1880 (effectively tripling in ten years) to over 42,000 by 1900. Famed railroad mogul Jay Gould predicted in 1884 that Dallas would have a population of 250,000 in fifty years (the census of 1930 showed the population had already exceeded this prediction by 10,000 people).<sup>31</sup> Gould gave a great compliment to the city now so closely tied with the cities of the North, stating “there is an air of business life and bustle about it that reminds one of a Northern city.”<sup>32</sup>

### After the Railroad

Business in Dallas began to boom after the establishment of the railroad connection. In 1873 alone 725 new buildings and residences were constructed which cost over 1,377,000 unadjusted 1873 dollars. By 1875 the city of Dallas had built “seven churches, ten or twelve private schools (but no public ones), two foundries, fifteen to twenty lumber yards, three planing mills, a sash and door factory, five large brick yards, two soap factories, and five steam powered flouring mills.”<sup>33</sup> A new two-story courthouse was erected in 1877 along with modern conveniences like wooden water and gas lines running under the gravel paved streets. The railroad also ushered in a new era for Dallas, acting as a link for trade with St. Louis, Galveston, and New Orleans.

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<sup>31</sup> Meinig, *Imperial Texas, An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography*, 75.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 21.

For many years prior to the introduction of the railroad, cotton had been a money-producing crop for Texas; in 1852 the state was ranked eighth in terms of cotton production in the nation.<sup>34</sup> Several factors contributed to the success of cotton in Texas, and the Dallas area in particular: the clearing and seizure of native land, and the invention of a steel plow in the late nineteenth century made breaking the hard-packed clay soil of the Blackland Prairie easier, and heavy immigration from the Deep South and Europe brought citizens with a knowledge of cultivating cotton. However, nothing contributed to the success of Dallas as a cotton capital like the introduction of the railroad.<sup>35</sup> By 1872 Dallas was one of the largest inland cotton exchanges in the nation, shipping by rail to other cities, and allowing for local growers to expand their business interests and profits. While Galveston and New Orleans' water thoroughfares faced competition with the railroads' price cutting on "through car lots" of cotton bales, Dallas' wealth increased.<sup>36</sup>

Besides abundant prosperity, the railroads also brought a number of the "hangers-on, camp followers, gamblers, rowdies, hustlers, drunks, pimps, demimonde floaters, and other undesirables."<sup>37</sup> During the early days of attempting to secure a railroad connection in Dallas, some citizens opposed because of the

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<sup>34</sup> Karen Gerhardt Britton, Fred C. Elliot, and E.A. Miller, "COTTON CULTURE | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/afc03> (accessed January 26, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 23.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 26.

“rowdy and undesirable element” it would bring to the emerging city.<sup>38</sup> The subsequent population growth brought urban sprawl to the developing city, and the *Dallas Herald* reported in 1875 that “with the exception of a few old residents, the great body of our people are strangers to one another.”<sup>39</sup>

There were three red-light districts known as Deep Ellum, Frogtown, and Boggy Bayou. The Deep Ellum district was near the route of the T&P and H&TC rail lines, and was reportedly quite rough. Violence and murder in this area were commonplace occurrences. Frogtown, so named for the thousands of bullfrogs that were known to climb out of the river, was originally a residential neighborhood north of the courthouse, but became a den of iniquity that found the residents abandoning their houses for more acceptable neighborhoods. Boggy Bayou was by far the most fashionable of the so-called “amusement areas” and was home to many gambling houses, pool halls, sporting houses, and saloons. The fairgrounds were the locus of various cockfights, horse races, and dog fights.<sup>40</sup> The less desirable districts of Dallas followed the same geographic formula as other vice zones in Texas towns; all were located within a few blocks of the downtown business districts and the railroad depot.

The entertaining ladies of this area did not enjoy luxurious settings. They were employed out of established bawdy houses and shack-like cribs; some found

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<sup>38</sup> Reed, *A History of the Texas Railroads*, 208.

<sup>39</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-28.

their way to dance halls and variety theaters. Twenty-five cents could buy a cowboy, farm hand, rancher, politician, gambler, or businessman an evening of diverting entertainment.<sup>41</sup> The Dallas ladies were fabled to be the most beautiful west of New Orleans' Storyville.<sup>42</sup>

Activities in the institutions of vice in the City of Dallas were not always diversionary. Many famous gunslingers and figures of the Wild West made themselves known in Dallas. John H. "Doc" Holliday, later of the Wyatt Earp gang and participant in the gunfight at the OK Corral, practiced as a dentist in Dallas from September 1873 to January 1875. He soon became immersed in the world of gambling and became quite the card shark, learning techniques for taking the dealer and using trick decks to sway the cards in his favor.<sup>43</sup> In January of 1875, Holliday and his companion were involved in a gunfight at the St. Charles Saloon, and were arrested. After this point, the citizens of Dallas were supposed to have requested that Holliday leave the City of Dallas.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> David Humphrey, "PROSTITUTION | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jbp01> (accessed January 28, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 26.

<sup>43</sup> Karen Holliday Tanner, *Doc Holliday: A Family Portrait* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 89-90, <http://www.netlibrary.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/Reader/> (accessed February 4, 2011).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-95.



The railroad brought unsavory things to be sure, but it also brought prosperity to Dallas that had never been achieved before. There were families that did have money and were considered rich; the Miller family, for example, completed their antebellum plantation Millermore in 1862, ten years before that ever-important rail connection.<sup>45</sup> After the arrival of the railroad however, a new class of wealthy citizens emerged, and like any high society created diversions in order to see and be seen. These public amusements included a roller skating rink, a shooting gallery, several dancing pavilions (both indoor and out), rides and exhibitions of the fairgrounds, and several German biergartens. Theaters were established, Tom Field and Lemuel Craddock each opened unassuming, frontier theaters. Craddock's was located above his wholesale liquor store.<sup>46</sup> In 1885 a new and modern opera house was built on the corner of Austin and Jackson streets.<sup>47</sup> Constructed to be compared with its northern compatriots, the three-story cream sandstone building showcased productions of anything from Shakespearian dramas to popular light comedies.

New technologies found their way to Dallas as well, and in 1881 the streets were paved with blocks of bois d'arc wood. Also in this year, the first telephones connected the Sanger Brothers' Dry Goods Store with the brothers' homes, and the

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<sup>45</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 213.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>47</sup> "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps" (Dallas: Sanborn Map Company, Environmental Data Resources, Inc., April 1885), Sheet 5, <http://sanborn.umi.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/cgi-bin/auth.cgi?command=AccessOK&CCSI=348n> (accessed February 3, 2011).

first electric lights were installed in their store.<sup>48</sup> After these firsts, the rest of the city began utilizing these modern conveniences and by 1883 the city directory bragged that the new technology “beautifully illuminates the streets in the heart of town with its pale, ghostly, and weird rays.”<sup>49</sup>

Dallas had had a city newspaper almost since John Neely Bryan drove his stake into the bluff overlooking the river crossing; the *Dallas Herald* was founded in 1849.<sup>50</sup> This paper saw many owners and constant changeover did not create a stable atmosphere for the news institution. In 1885, Alfred Horatio Belo brought a branch of the *Galveston News* to Dallas and called it the *Morning News*.<sup>51</sup> These two papers were instrumental in the news industry in that they were the first two in the nation to be connected by wire and print simultaneous editions. The *Dallas Morning News* published its first edition on October 1, 1885, and bought the defunct *Dallas Herald* in December of that same year.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> “Dallas by the Decade,” *Legacies: A History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas* 03, no. 02 (Fall 1991): 22, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph35119/m1/23/?q=%22prostitution%22,%20dallas> (accessed February 4, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 32.

<sup>50</sup> “DALLAS HERALD | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA),” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eed10> (accessed February 5, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 32.

<sup>52</sup> Judith M Garrett and Mickael V Hazel, “DALLAS MORNING NEWS | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA),” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eed12> (accessed February 5, 2011).

The new class of Dallasites wanted to emphasize the importance of education, and ladies schools and literary societies were founded to achieve this goal. Ursuline Academy, founded by six nuns from the Ursuline order in Galveston in 1874, taught girls of many faiths, not exclusively those of the Catholic faith.<sup>53</sup> The Episcopalian St. Mary's College was another venerable Dallas institution, and was considered to be the very best in preparatory schools as all of Dallas wished that their daughters would attend. Along with some of the best schools in the west, Dallas women also partook in literary societies such as the Shakespeare and the Standards Club.<sup>54</sup>

Life before the railroad connection differed vastly from life afterward, and Dallas owes its position as a modern center of commerce and industry to the railroad. As in any growing metropolis, crime and vice occurred, and some of it became legend. Money was made in Dallas, and the barons that enjoyed this benefit created this modern city. The years after the construction of the crossroads created by the H&TC and T&P established an environment favorable for the development of the arts and culture in the town that was quickly distancing itself from its frontier rivals.

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<sup>53</sup> Sister Lois Bannon, "URSULINE ACADEMY, DALLAS | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/iwu03> (accessed February 5, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> "Dallas by the Decade," 22.

## CHAPTER THREE

Dallas has a rich history of cultural institutions, and Dallas Heritage Village is certainly included in that tradition. The evolution of these types of institutions in Dallas still continues to this day, and DHV is an active participant. Inspired by the emerging trend of interactivity in museums, and especially history museums with decreasing attendance numbers, DHV has begun the process to reinterpret the exhibit spaces in their main street buildings. This chapter will detail the rich tradition of museums and expositions in Dallas's history, give an overview of Dallas Heritage Village as an institution, and include design for the reinterpretation of the railroad depot.

### Evolution of Cultural Institutions in Dallas

In this modern city of Dallas, the creation of cultural institutions was a legacy continued throughout the life of the city. The creation of schools, theaters, and libraries eventually lent themselves to the need to exhibit cultural treasures at expositions and museums. The first Dallas State Fair was held in 1859 in response to other local communities' fairs where local cattle and goods were displayed. Subsequent fairs of the 1860s and 70s were not financially viable due to the financial panic that swept the nation, the same panic that kept Dallas as the

terminus of the Southern and Pacific Railroad (S&P).<sup>1</sup> The fair of 1876 was a resounding success, however. Instead of focusing on agrarian interests the scope was shifted to new modern technologies and industries directly resulting from the fact that the railroad connection in Dallas created these new and exciting fields in this part of Texas.<sup>2</sup>

In 1886 the Dallas State Fair and Exposition was chartered as a private corporation, and the fairgrounds at Fair Park were purchased.<sup>3</sup> Among the many buildings construction for the enjoyment of the citizens of Texas was a complex of exposition buildings designed to mimic those of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876. This mammoth complex was the first dedicated space for the exhibition of objects, a precursor to the rich tradition of Dallas museums. In 1903 eight influential members of Dallas society founded the Dallas Art Association, which later became the Dallas Museum of Art.<sup>4</sup> The 1930s saw the creation of several cultural institutions in Dallas due to the Texas Centennial Exposition held in

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<sup>1</sup> McDonald, *Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925*, 232.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>3</sup> Nancy Wiley, "STATE FAIR OF TEXAS | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lks02> (accessed February 13, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Harry S Parker III, "DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kld01> (accessed February 13, 2011).

Dallas to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Texas Revolution.<sup>5</sup> Among these institutions was the Dallas Museum of Natural History in 1936.<sup>6</sup> Both of these museums continue to carry out their missions to serve the citizens of Dallas.

In January 1966 the Dallas County Heritage Society was formed as an instrument for the preservation of Millermore, the largest remaining Civil-War era home in the county.<sup>7</sup> The following year the Dallas Park Board approved the moving of Millermore to City Park, Dallas's first park and the site of Browder Springs. Other structures join Millermore on this site, and in 1976 it was deemed "Old City Park."<sup>8</sup> As of 2011, the historic village, now called "Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park," is home to 38 historic structures including a general store, a Victorian Jewish home, a shotgun house, the iconic Millermore, and the railroad depot arranged in a more or less circular pattern spread over thirteen acres.<sup>9</sup> The main street is featured in the center of the village and is composed of businesses that would engage in commerce in the growing city of Dallas. These structures include a bank, general store, saloon, and the railroad depot. Along with the depot, the Miller log house, the

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<sup>5</sup> "TEXAS CENTENNIAL | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lkt01> (accessed February 13, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> "Museum of Nature & Science: Background | Dallas, Texas," <http://www.natureandscience.org/information/background.asp> (accessed February 13, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> *Milestones Over 40 Years: Dallas County Heritage Society, Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park; 1966-2006* (Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park, 2006), 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> "Welcome to Dallas Heritage Village - "Living Breathing Texas History"," <http://www.dallasheritagevillage.org/Default.aspx> (accessed February 13, 2011).

dogtrot Gano homestead, and a Native American tipi interpret life in early Dallas. Located south of downtown Dallas, the village is set against the backdrop of a modern city. This makes it an ideal location to tell the story of Dallas, and how it came to be the large metropolis that it is today. The mission of Dallas Heritage Village is to “collect, preserve and teach the history of Dallas and North Central Texas.”<sup>10</sup> The museum interprets the time period from 1840 to 1910 using their collection of historic buildings and objects “to sponsor research, publications and exhibits, and to present educational programs and special events for diverse audiences of children, families and adults.”<sup>11</sup>

The train depot located at Dallas Heritage Village is the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (Katy) Railroad depot from Fate, Texas.<sup>12</sup> Fate is located on Highway 66 in Rockwall County about 30 miles from Dallas.<sup>13</sup> In 1880 a post office was established in Fate, which was so-named by an early settler. As was the case in Dallas, the citizens of Fate were excited when the Katy railroad made plans to pass through the area in 1866. However, the railroad actually passed about half a mile northeast of Fate, through the land of Wylie T. Barnes. This town, originally called Barnes City,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> “Railroad Depot,” <http://www.dallasheritagevillage.org/Depot.aspx> (accessed February 22, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> “Dallas, TX to Fate, TX - Google Maps,” [http://maps.google.com/maps?q=fate,+texas&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=Fate,+TX&gl=us&ei=tTtjTezcLIPGlQfyxemzBQ&sa=X&oi=geocode\\_result&ct=title&resnum=1&ved=0CB0Q8gEwAA](http://maps.google.com/maps?q=fate,+texas&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=Fate,+TX&gl=us&ei=tTtjTezcLIPGlQfyxemzBQ&sa=X&oi=geocode_result&ct=title&resnum=1&ved=0CB0Q8gEwAA) (accessed February 22, 2011).

was renamed Fate when the residents of the original Fate moved to the new city because of the railroad and did not want to have to petition for a new post office. The small city of Fate grew with the addition of the railroad, but did not experience the boom that benefited Dallas.<sup>14</sup> By the late decades of the twentieth century, Fate had a population of less than 500; however, recent data from the 2010 census suggests that the population has recently exploded, with an estimated population of (a still meager) 6,300.<sup>15</sup>

This railroad depot was moved to Dallas Heritage Village in the 1970s, and was restored in 1973 with the aid of a gift to the City of Dallas by the Junior League of Dallas on its fiftieth anniversary. The structure has been interpreted as an example of what a train depot would have looked like circa 1880s Dallas, even though the actual depot is from Fate.

During a visit to Dallas Heritage Village, I observed families interacting with the current interpretive schemes of both the depot and the general store. One mother upon entering the depot asked what building she was in, while her children asked if they could touch anything, and were pleased that the benches offered a place to sit and rest. Another child came into the depot, walked into the ticket office, wrote her hours of operation on the chalkboard, and set herself up in the window to sell tickets to her family members. These observations lead to the conclusion that

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<sup>14</sup> Brian Hart, "FATE, TX | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hlf09> (accessed February 23, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> "About the City of Fate Texas," [http://www.cityoffate.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=27](http://www.cityoffate.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=27) (accessed February 23, 2011).



signage for the depot needs to be more visible, and that children want to interact with their surroundings. In contrast with the depot, the general store with its newly redesigned interactive space attracted more visitors who stayed for longer periods of time. The children in this space were actively playing with produce, sorting the mail, and measuring objects on the balance scale. An interpreter behind the counter showed the adults the newest luxury items for sale in Dallas, including women's perfumes and hair accessories.

Recently, inspired by the new shift towards interaction in museums, staff at Dallas Heritage Village decided to update the village's exhibits and historical spaces to make living history a more modern and interactive experience. The decision was made in response to visitors' changing expectations over time and the understanding of different learning styles. The new interpretive theme is entitled "All Roads Lead to Dallas" and deals with the idea that many "roads" connected Dallas to other large cities and allowed for it to grow into the metropolis that it is today. The "roads" referenced in this project may refer to literal transportation routes (like the railways and trading routes) or to more abstract passages for new ideas and cultural innovations. Dallas Heritage Village's new interpretation of their thirty-eight structures focuses on the main street area, a street consisting of "a bank, general store, saloon, depot, interactive family learning area housed in our former law office and a performance space/classroom in the former print shop, likely to be

called the Opera House.”<sup>16</sup> Renewal of the interpretive scheme in the Katy Railroad Depot was proposed and accepted as the focus of this specific project.

### Methodology

This project was divided into two distinct phases: historical research and preliminary exhibit design. The first phase involved sifting through large amounts of information and condensing it into an accessible form that may then be used as a framework for the exhibit. There was an emphasis on primary sources including images, maps, and excerpts from diaries, letters, and newspapers. Five topics for research were outlined as follows:

1. Travel and transport routes to Dallas, particularly the path of the Preston Road in its many historical forms. This may include travel by Native Americans.
2. The effect those early roads had on Dallas’ establishment and early population growth
3. Arrival of the railroad and its importance in building Dallas
4. Systems of commerce and exchange, of goods and money, that tied Dallas to other places
5. Dallas’ position in the exchange of culture, ideas and news<sup>17</sup>

The second phase of the project, the preliminary exhibit design, involved presenting the researched material to Dallas Heritage Village’s visitors. This phase involved specific planning of ways to creatively interpret the material to audiences of all age levels, as much of DHV’s demographic is children with school groups or families, and senior citizens. An emphasis was to be placed on relating the historical

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<sup>16</sup> Gary Smith and Evelyn Montgomery, “All Roads Lead to Dallas-a New Interpretation for Dallas Heritage Village,” September 13, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

material with people living in the twenty-first century. The guideline for this phase was to “determine potential museum locations for presentation of different areas of the research, with suggestions for presentation, including artifacts, images, display proposals.”<sup>18</sup> This process was applied to the railroad depot, and all phases were carried out as requested by Curator of Exhibits and Collection Evelyn Montgomery, and President/Executive Director Gary N. Smith.

### Phase One

Historical research was divided into three areas for the depot interpretation: Dallas before the railroad, establishment of the railway, and Dallas after the arrival of the railroad. The section on Dallas before the railroad focuses on the route and influence of Native American, French, Spanish and other Anglo traders on the region, La Reunion, the Peters Colony, and the founding of Dallas by John Neely Bryan. Research in the post-railroad era focuses on the changes in Dallas including the population explosion, Dallas as the largest inland cotton exchange, and new ideas and technologies easing into the city due to the rail connection.

### Phase Two

The scope of the project did not include physical implementation of the exhibit, so the material was presented to Dallas Heritage Village as a schematic plan. A simple blueprint of the depot was used (with elevations and views of each interior wall, and an aerial view) to depict how the planned exhibit would be set up in the space. (See Fig.1)

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

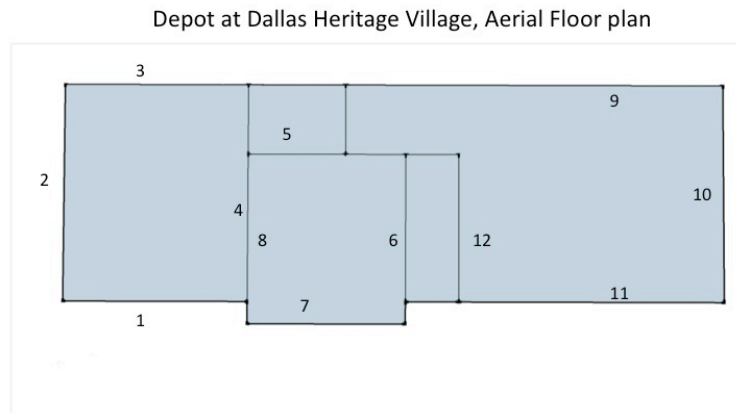


Figure 1. Aerial floor plan of the depot at Dallas Heritage Village with wall numbers as referenced in text

The target audience for Dallas Heritage Village consists of families with children, schools group visits, and the retired with an interest in history. Given that more than half of the audience is children, label copy and associated activity panels were written with this in mind (Appendix A). The visitor enters the space and moves to the left where the story begins with the origins of Dallas and life before the railroad ( See Fig. 2).

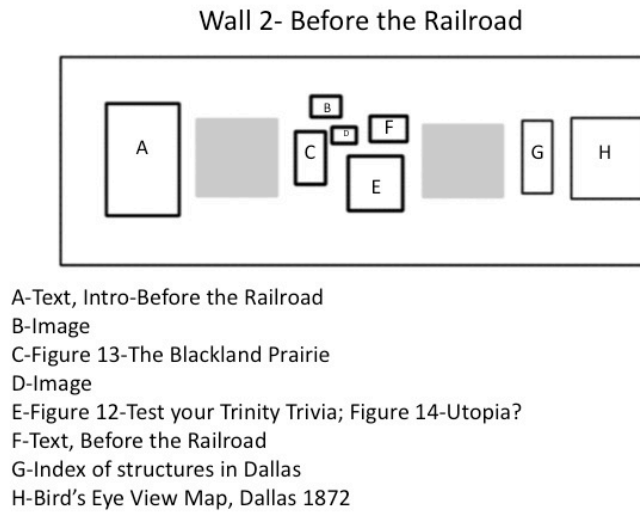


Figure 2. Wall 2 schematic

### Utopia?

A utopian society is an ideal society where life  
 functions perfectly  
 Draw a picture of what a perfect society means  
 to you

Figure 3. Panel discussing utopia and requesting visitor responses

A panel discussing the concept of utopia will be hung near the section discussing La Reunion. This panel will ask the visitor to draw his or her perfect society on a sticky note and leave it on the accompanying board (See Fig. 3). The back wall of the waiting room will feature benches and a table filled with general books and journals of the era and a bound book with reproduced images of *The Dallas Morning News* (it should be bound to prevent damage) to provide the visitor

with activities done while waiting for the train to arrive (See Fig. 4). The wall to the right of the entryway will feature a panel urging visitors to leave a sticky note telling DHV what invention has impacted their lives the most (See Fig. 5).

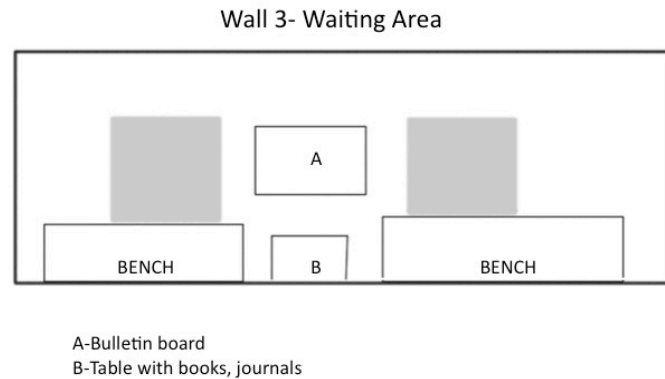


Figure 4. Wall 3 schematic

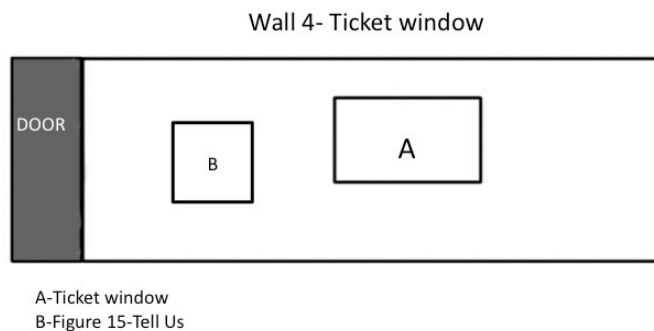
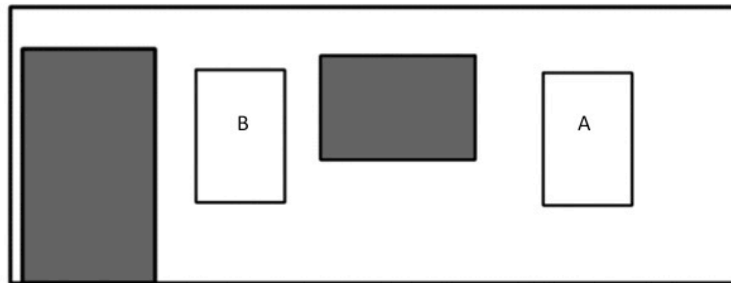


Figure 5. Wall 4 schematic

The visitor then moves along the hallway towards the cargo to learn about the construction of the railroad (See Fig. 6). An interactive component is setup in the ticket booth in which the visitor may send messages with a reproduction telegraph (See Fig. 7). This interactive emphasizes the exhibit theme of new technologies emerging in Dallas because of the railroad.

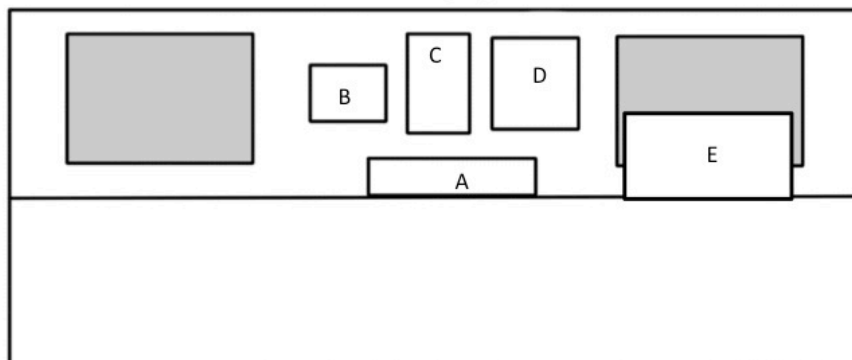
### Wall 5- Construction of the Railroad



A-Introduction to Construction of Railroad  
B-Construction of Railroad

Figure 6. Wall 5 schematic

### Wall 7- Telegraph interactive



A- Telegraph, featuring Figure 3-International Morse code)  
B-Figure 4- What is a Telegraph?  
C-Figure 6-Dallas:WIRED!, and Figure 7-Send a Message by Telegraph  
D-Figure 5-How does it work?, Figure 9-Tell Us!  
E-Audio component for decoding secret messages, Figure 8-Can You Decode this Secret Message?, Figure 10- Fun facts

Figure 7. Wall 7 schematic showing telegraph interactive

The replica telegraph machine (composed of key, sounder, and resonator) will be used as an interactive where visitors will be allowed to tap out Morse code on the machine to “send” messages to their companions. There will also be an auditory component to this installation with a recording of a “secret message”

recorded in Morse code that the visitor will try to guess. An audio station complete with pairs of headphones will be nearby to facilitate this element. The telegraph will be accompanied with a label (See Fig. 8) of the key for translating the English alphabet into Morse code. Additional text panels will accompany the interactive explaining what the telegraph is, how it works, and its history with and significance to Dallas (See Figs. 9, 10, 11). The telegraph interactive will be accompanied by various open-ended questions that allow the visitor to respond to the exhibit. These responses will be recorded by the visitor on sticky notes and placed on a board; they may be written, drawn, or other (perhaps unrelated) responses (See Figs 12, 13, 14, 15).

**International Morse Code**

1. A dash is equal to three dots.
2. The space between parts of the same letter is equal to one dot.
3. The space between two letters is equal to three dots.
4. The space between two words is equal to seven dots.

A	· —	U	·· —
B	·· — ·	V	·· — ·
C	— · — ·	W	·· — —
D	·· — ·	X	·· — · —
E	·	Y	·· — — ·
F	·· · — ·	Z	·· — — —
G	·· — —		
H	·· · ·		
I	··		
J	· — — —		
K	·· — —	1	· — — — —
L	·· — ·	2	·· — — —
M	— —	3	·· · — —
N	·· — —	4	·· · — —
O	— — —	5	·· · — —
P	·· — — ·	6	·· · — —
Q	·· — — ·	7	·· · — —
R	·· — ·	8	·· · — —
S	·· ·	9	·· · — —
T	—	0	— — — — —

Figure 8. Key for Morse code<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Curtis Bishop and L.R. Wilcox, "TELEGRAPH SERVICE | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/egt01> (accessed February 25, 2011).



## How Does it Work?

The sender uses a series of long and short taps on the key to compose a message that is electrically carried to the receiver using connected wires

The receiver then listens to the incoming taps via the sounder and can decode the message based on the sounds the receiver hears

Figure 9. Panel explaining how telegraphy works<sup>20</sup>,

## What is a Telegraph?

The electromechanical telegraph was invented in 1832 by Samuel Morse and his assistant Alfred Vail

Telegraphy is a way of sending messages through connected wires using electricity. These messages can travel for many miles this way.

Figure 10. Panel explaining telegraphy<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Sam Acheson, *Dallas Yesterday* (Dallas: SMU Press, 1977), 264.

<sup>21</sup> "Telegraph," *Telegraph-History administered by the Antique Wireless Association*, 2011, <http://www.telegraph-history.org/edison/appletons/index.html> (accessed February 25, 2011).

# Dallas: WIRED!

The telegraph first came to Texas in January 1854 and was installed by the Texas and Red River Telegraph Company. In 1872, Dallas was connected to the bigger cities of the North, and the world, in two ways: the railroad and the telegraph. The arrival of the railroad that was just around the corner allowed for the telegraph to be brought to Dallas. Even though the railroad was responsible for bringing the telegraph to Dallas, it arrived about a week before the first train. The telegraph is one example of new technology introduced to Dallas because of the railroad. The Galveston News and the Dallas Morning News were the first newspapers in the country to publish simultaneous editions. They began this practice in 1885, when the first edition of the Dallas Morning News was published.

Figure 11. Panel connecting Dallas and the telegraph<sup>22, 23</sup>

## Send a Message by Telegraph

Use this telegraph to tap out a message to your friends:

Study the key for Morse code.

Dots are short taps and lines are long taps

See if you can decode messages sent by your friends!

Figure 12. Panel explaining interactive

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<sup>22</sup> Bishop and Wilcox, "TELEGRAPH SERVICE | The Handbook of Texas Online| Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)."

<sup>23</sup> Acheson, *Dallas Yesterday*, 264.

## Can You Decode this Secret Message?

Listen to this telegraph transmission and see if you can figure out the secret message...

Figure 13. Instructions for audio booth interactive

## Tell Us!

Put the sticky notes on the board to tell the museum your answers; tell us with words, or draw us a picture!

What do we do today instead of sending telegrams to people?

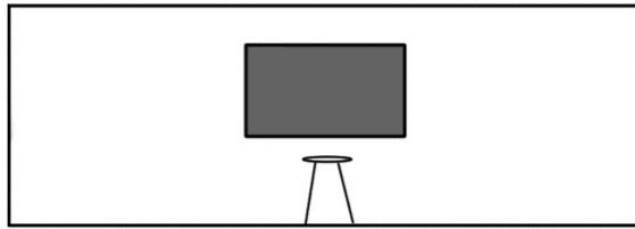
How do you communicate with people that live close to you?

How do you communicate with people that live far away?

Figure 14. Panel requesting visitor participation

The ticket booth, in addition to housing the telegraph interactive, will also feature a component that will allow for visitors to buy and sell train tickets. Based upon observation done in the depot, visitors already use this space for this sort of role-playing and adding props will only enrich the experience. A replica cash register will be installed in the window with reproduction money. Tickets will be printed on cardstock and bound together in a booklet that will be attached to the desk; they will be based on the MKT train tickets in the collection (See Fig. 15).

#### Wall 8- Ticket Window, interior

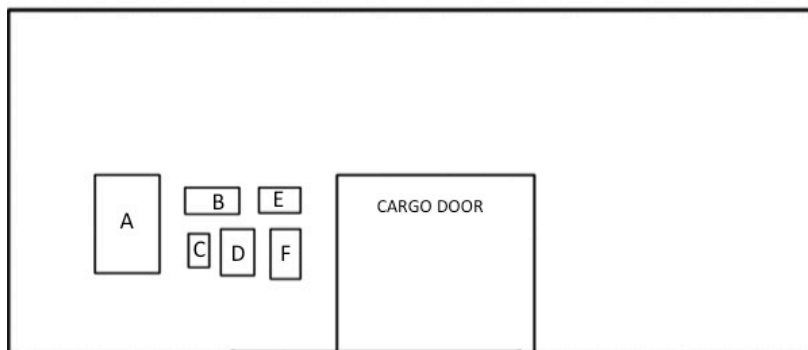


Ticket window and stool for visitors to "sell" tickets

Figure 15. Wall 8 schematic

The visitor then moves into the loading area of the depot to learn about Dallas life after the railroad (See Fig. 16). One panel uses the population explosion that occurred in Dallas to explore mathematic principals, and to help the visitor realize the dramatic increase in the population at this time. These two panels function as a flip top where the question panel is hung on a hinge and may be flipped to reveal the answers on the second panel (See Fig. 17 and 18).

#### Wall 9- Life After the Railroad



- A- Text panel, Introduction to life in Dallas after the railroad
- B- Image
- C-Figure 16 and 17-Population Explosion flip-top panel
- D-Figure 18-New Technology in Dallas
- E-Image
- F-Image

Figure 16. Wall 9 schematic

## Population Explosion

The population of Dallas grew very quickly after the arrival of the railroad.

1870- 3,000 people

1880-10,000 people

That's 7,000 people that came to Dallas in just ten years. Can you figure out how many came per year? Per month? Per week? Per day?

Figure 17. Population explosion flip-top; top

## Population Explosion

In ten years 7,000 people came to Dallas in ten years

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \frac{7000 \text{ people}}{10 \text{ years}} = 700 & \frac{700 \text{ people}}{12 \text{ months}} = \text{about } 58 & \begin{array}{l} \text{People per} \\ \text{year} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{People per} \\ \text{month} \end{array} \\ \\ \frac{58 \text{ people}}{4 \text{ weeks}} = \text{about } 14 & \frac{14 \text{ people}}{7 \text{ days}} = 2 & \begin{array}{l} \text{People per} \\ \text{week} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{people} \\ \text{per day} \end{array} \end{array}$$

Figure 18. Population explosion flip-top; bottom

Wall 9 will also feature a panel discussing the Tejano section house and the African American shotgun house that are both visible through the cargo door. This panel will give details on the lives of the men that work in the depot, who are struggling to carve out a living in a city that observes Jim Crow laws and values the work of whites over all other ethnicities. Both of these houses at Dallas Heritage Village utilize costumed interpreters, Mrs. De Leon in the section house and Mrs. Freeman in the shotgun house, and discussions about the depot will be added to

their interpretive biographies and scripts. Along with a discussion about life in their homes, and life in Jim Crow Dallas, they will discuss how their lives depend on the railroad and the activities of the depot; after all, they would not be in Dallas if it weren't for the work offered by the railroad. Mrs. De Leon, whose husband is in charge of the Tejano crew that maintains a section of the railroad, illustrates how the railroad provides for their family—both in terms of their house, and her job to feed all of the men.

An interactive is set up in the cargo area that allows the visitor to pack boxes of items shipped to Dallas (See Fig. 19). The wooden crates that are currently stacked in this area will be used by visitors to pack goods to ship to other locations. The goods and merchandise will include native products (cotton, leather goods, grains, et. cetera) that were shipped from Dallas, or products that were imported (china, fashionable clothing, toys). There will be a link between this site and the mercantile shop at Dallas Heritage Village located across the street from the depot in that some of these products that were imported will be available “for sale” in the mercantile shop. For instance, mail will “arrive” at the depot and be packed for shipment to the general store, where it is sorted. The boxes will feature shipping labels on them that indicate where the goods historically would go or have come from between the years 1872 and 1910. All objects used in packing will be reproductions rather than artifacts from the collection, and will include purchased objects and objects fabricated by DHV. Interpretive labels in this area will discuss life after the railroad, and additional interactive labels attached to the objects will discuss their historical importance to Dallas at this time. Additional text panels on

the walls ask engaging questions of the audience and request that they post their answers using sticky notes in the accompanying space (See Fig. 20). One wall will feature a case of paraphernalia used for cheating while gambling; these items will need to be acquired by Dallas Heritage Village (See Fig. 21).

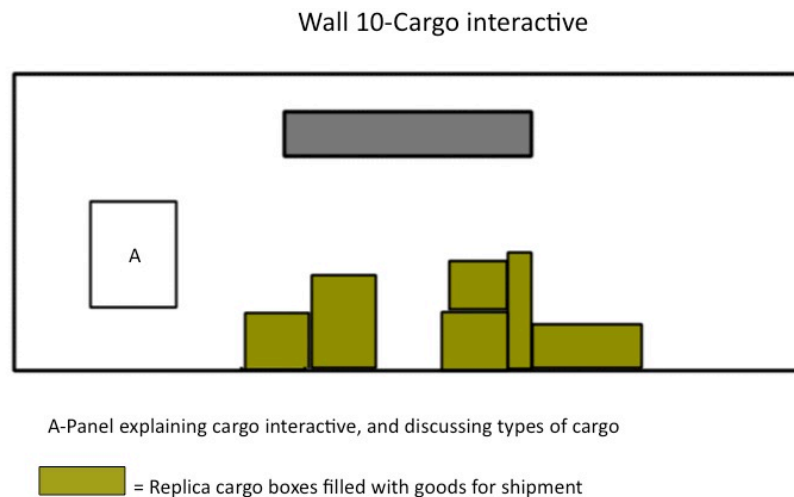


Figure 19. Wall 10 schematic

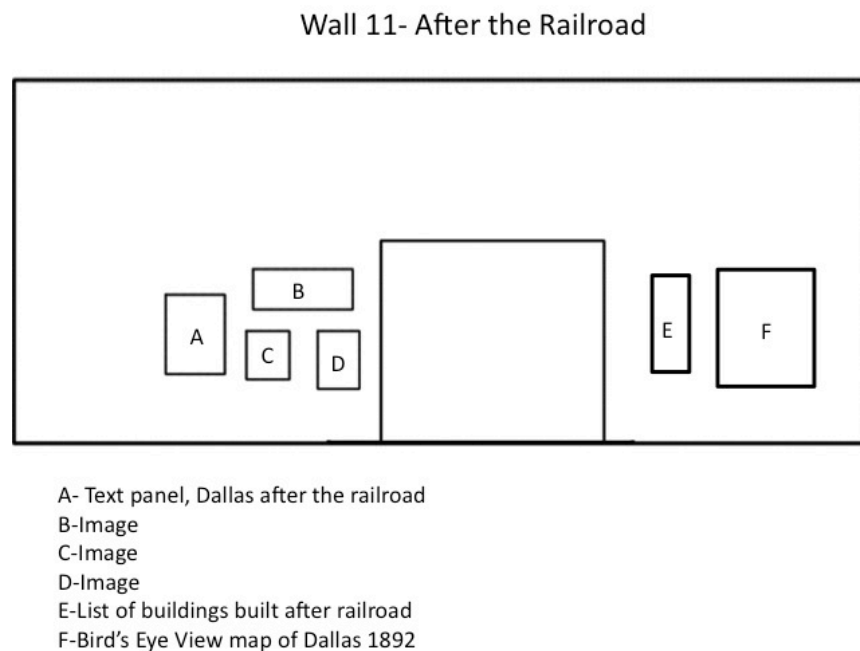
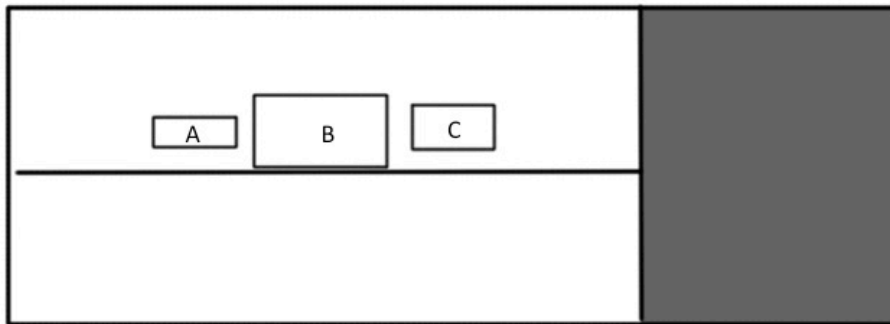


Figure 20. Wall 11 schematic

## Wall 12-Gambling and Cheating tools



A-Figure 19-Gambling and Gunfights

B-Case filled with cheat decks, card cutters, other cheating devices

C-Figure 20- Tricks of the Trade

Figure 21. Wall 12 schematic

Sound will also be incorporated into the interpretation of the railroad depot. Speakers placed in the upper corners of the cargo room near the doors will play general train sounds (whistles, steam engine, shouts of “all aboard!”, etc.). Singing or songs may also occasionally be heard from these speakers—great Jazz musicians such as Blind Lemon Jefferson began their careers playing along the tracks of the Dallas railroad in Deep Ellum.

These recommendations for the reinterpretation of the railroad depot at Dallas Heritage Village are preliminary sketches for the ideal layout of the new exhibit. They are based upon primary research done about Dallas and the railroad, and may need to be altered to fit the realities of a functioning museum. For example, some aspects of design may not be cost effective, such as acquiring gambling paraphernalia. In these instances, new solutions will have to be devised. All in all, the recommendations given herein reflect the objectives of the project



proposal in that they illustrate the impact the railroad had on everyday life in Dallas, and do so in an interactive manner. When combined traditional didactic label copy and interactive exploratory elements create an environment in which all types of learners are taken into consideration, thus creating a successful interpretation of an historic space.

## CONCLUSIONS

Historic house museums and villages are under great duress in America's modern society and economy. While the market seems to have stabilized and private funding is increasing, government funded institutions are facing dramatic cuts. On the chopping block on both state and federal levels are the Texas Historical Commission and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a grant funding organization. It will be several years before these institutions will be financially able to return to pre-recession earnings, if they are able to do so at all. History museums that are currently struggling to secure funding must incorporate new solutions to ensure sustainability in a world where museum visitation is concentrated in the arts and sciences.

By researching and responding to trends in visitor preferences, museum professionals may be able to counteract the effect of a soft economy. Modern visitors are looking for experiences in which they are immersed in the subject matter and can interact with it. They view museums as social places as much as, and sometimes more than, places of learning, and expect museums to provide worthwhile experiences to accommodate their wishes. Even though these changes may upset the traditional foundations of the museum, a strong effort must be made to accommodate these desires while continuing to be true to the mission of the museum. Additionally, continuing research into the subject matter covered by the

museum is a vital way to keep the museum fresh and relevant, and demonstrates to the community that the museum serves as a trustworthy source of educational material.

The purpose of this project was to meet all of these objectives while reinterpreting the depot at Dallas Heritage Village. While the reinterpretation process was begun, there are still several steps remaining to be completed, the least of which is the physical installation of the exhibit. After installation, there should be an evaluation of the exhibit incorporating visitor feedback to ensure that the exhibit objectives are being met, and that the introduction of an interactive component somehow enriches visitor experiences. As of April 2011, two of the six main street structures have been reinterpreted (the general store and the railroad depot). The remaining four structures should be updated using the methods described in this project. Additionally, supplementary materials for educational programs taking place in these spaces could be developed to further the educational mission of the museum. This component could also enhance Dallas Heritage Village's eligibility for grant funding.

Regardless of visitation numbers and profit margins, museums must regularly evaluate and revamp pre-existing interpretive schemes that are found to be out of touch with contemporary audiences. Maintaining accountability as institutions that provide services that are valuable and integral to their communities will allow for survival through current and future financial hardships.

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