



*The
Tarrant County
Courthouse*

A Self-Guided Walking Tour

Steve M. King
by

Steve M. King

Judge, Tarrant County Probate Court #1

The Tarrant County Courthouse
A Self-Guided Tour
ERRATA

P.1, line 1- should read: *"Tarrant County Courthouse"*

P.10, last line- should read: *"Meneely Bell Company"*

P.22- wording under photographs

should read: *"Chris Marshall 1950-1992"*

"John J. Edwards 1958-1992"

P.31- Inscription on Charles Tandy

statue should read: *"Charles Tandy - 1918-1978"*



The Tarrant Courthouse Courthouse
A Self-Guided Walking Tour



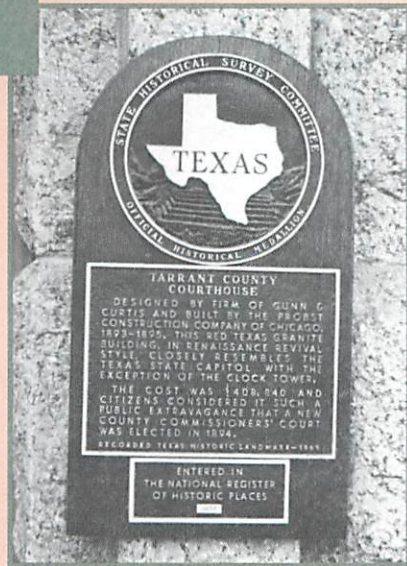
ou are touring the Tarrant County Courthouse, the fifth permanent courthouse Tarrant County has had since its organization in 1849 and the third masonry courthouse at this location. Construction was started in 1893 and the building opened July 3, 1895 with the Second Court of Appeals as the first tenant.

Built in the French-influenced Renaissance Revival style of Texas Pink granite, taken from the same quarry as the stone used in the Texas State Capitol, its walls are five feet thick at their base. Except for the hardware, all materials in this Courthouse (as originally constructed) were native to Texas. The building towers 193 feet, 7-3/4 inches at the top of the clock tower, and covers 114,211 square feet. The Courthouse Plaza is laid out on two city blocks, positioned to be a focal point both from downtown to the South as well as from below the Trinity River bluff to the North.



Please begin your tour on the South porch of the Courthouse.

Official Texas Historic Marker, Texas Historical Commission - *South porch of the Courthouse, (left of front doors):*



Courthouse Cornerstone - *(to the right of the front doors):*

When the cornerstone was laid, a number of items were placed under the cornerstone in a copper box, following the custom of the time. These included: a bottle of Tarrant County wine; copies of current local newspapers; photographs of downtown buildings; a listing of courthouse employees; rosters of local fraternal lodges, church membership lists and the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic; \$100.00 in Confederate money, a commemorative coin from the 1894 Columbia Exposition, 1847 and 1883 copper pennies; the original of the oration given at cornerstone ceremonies by Henry M. Furman and a lock of hair from a child of County Judge Robert G. Johnson.



Renovation Dedication Marker - *In the center of the south porch, placed upon the renovation of the Courthouse in 1983.*

Origin of Fort Worth as County Seat

This Courthouse is located on the site of a military post established in 1849 on a bluff overlooking the Trinity River by a company of U.S. Second Dragoons under the command of Lt. Ripley Arnold. The fort was named in honor of General William Jenkins Worth, a hero of the Mexican War and commander of United States forces in this region at that time.



Tarrant County was one of 26 counties largely created out of the Peters Colony, land set aside for colonization in the early 1840's when Peters and Company of Louisville, Kentucky contracted with the Republic of Texas to bring in at least 250 families a year. Tarrant County was established by act of the legislature signed by Governor George T. Wood on December 20, 1849. The county was named for General Edward H. Tarrant, who, in 1841, under the authority of the Republic of Texas, led an expeditionary force of some seventy-six men in a raid on Village Creek (a few miles to the east of Fort Worth) in an attempt to expel hostile Indians from the area. Tarrant was also a member of the Congress of the Republic of Texas (see inscription from monument below, page 13).

The first county elections were held in August 1850. In August 1851, a special election was held to determine the county seat. Birdville, a few miles to the northeast, first enjoyed the distinction of being county seat of Tarrant County. Two different frame structures are said to have served as courthouses there [the location is approximately in

the 6100 block of Broadway in present-day Haltom City]. As both Fort Worth and Birdville grew, a spirited competition also grew between the cities for the seat of county government. A group of 38 Fort Worth civic boosters vowed to pay for the construction of a brick courthouse if the seat of county government were moved to the city on the bluff.

A special election for the location of the county seat was held in 1856. Following a day of accusations and counter-accusations of election fraud, Fort Worth edged out Birdville by only a handful of votes. Fights and fatal duels ensued over the next four years between supporters of both locations. Finally, in 1860, another special election was held. This time Fort Worth, by now the larger town, received 548 votes. The geographical center of the county, a compromise location, garnered 301 votes. Birdville tallied only four.

At various times, a diverse collection of buildings have served the county as interim sites for the transaction of the county's business. Three permanent courthouses have stood on this spot. One burned, one was outgrown, this one survives.



The Courthouse Today is home to the Second Court of Appeals, one District Court, two Probate Courts, three County Courts at Law and one Justice of the Peace Court. These courts share the Courthouse with the County Clerk's Office, Elections Administration, a constable's office and the Tarrant County Law Library.

First Floor

As you enter the Courthouse through the South door, proceed to the center of the building.

The Rotunda

In the heart of the courthouse is the rotunda, a design going back to Roman architecture. A central shaft or rotunda opens through the center of the building, terminating at an inner dome or *oculus* containing the county seal in stained glass. The hallways of the Courthouse are the most unchanged from the original building, with twenty-five-foot corridors, marble wainscoting and terrazo floors. The construction of the Courthouse was pioneering in its use of concrete and steel. The steel columns and beams throughout the building were encased in clay tiles for protection from fire.

Located in the rotunda on the first floor is the sculpture entitled "Free Legal Advice" by Lex Graham, donated to the people of Tarrant County by the artist on December 3, 1983.

The first floor houses the County Clerk's offices, the 231st District Court, Justice of the Peace Court Precinct 1 and Constable Precinct 1.

Please proceed to the West (left from the South entrance) to view the photographic exhibit assembled for the renovation of the Courthouse in 1983.

The Photographic Exhibit

- 1. *Fort Worth, a region producing superior crops of cotton, wheat, oats, and tobacco - 1872 (The earliest view of Fort Worth, Texas, published in What I Saw in Texas).***

This earliest known drawing of Fort Worth was published by John W. Forney, who travelled across the state scouting a route for the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Forney commented that the view in Fort Worth was "the finest we enjoyed during our visit to Texas - especially in the western direction and in the course pursued by the Texas and Pacific Railroad."

- 2. *The domed Tarrant County Courthouse which was constructed after the Courthouse fire in March of 1876.***

Preparations for the rebuilding of the destroyed Courthouse began almost immediately following the fire. The cornerstone for the new Courthouse was laid January 3, 1877. Built with stones from its burned predecessor, the new structure featured a central octagonal core with four wings projecting from alternate sides toward the corners of the public square. The wings were used for county offices, judges' chambers and jury rooms with the courtrooms occupying the upper and lower floors of the main section. Praised in the local newspapers for having been brave enough to "get out of the beaten track," Thomas & Werner, Architects and Builders from St. Louis, delighted the public with their design. The limestone walls were stuccoed and finished in Italianate fashion to represent brownstone. Architectural touches included a statue of Justice and a functional cupola enabling people to view Fort Worth.

- 3. *Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas, 1876.***

This 1876 panoramic view by D. D. Morse, published by Chas. Shober & Co. and the Chicago Lithograph Co, was made in celebration of the arrival of the Texas and Pacific Railroad that year. An arriving train is on the horizon in this earliest known view of the first permanent Courthouse on the

bluff. Construction of Fort Worth's first Courthouse began in 1859 but halted abruptly after only the first floor had been built as the demands of the Civil War claimed the manpower and financial resources of the County. When K. M. Van Zandt came to Fort Worth after the war, he commented on the "desolation of a half-finished courthouse." Completed in the late 1860's, with a design representative of the antebellum square courthouse, the building was rectangular with three openings per side, measuring 45 by 55 feet, with a pyramidal tin-sheathed roof and a cupola containing a lantern. It was bounded by the dusty streets named for destinations to the West (Weatherford and Fort Belknap) and heroes of the Texas Revolution (Houston and Rusk). For a time before construction was finally completed, the unfinished upper floor was the scene of frequent balls, dances and talent shows before the City had other performance halls.

In the early morning hours of March 29, 1876, the Courthouse was destroyed by fire. Two precinct constables, sleeping in the Chief Justice's (County Judge's) office, sounded the alarm, but the city's hook and ladder company arrived too late. A majority of the county records were lost. The Presbyterian Church which had used the courthouse for its meeting site lost an organ, seats and a complete library to the flames.

4. *Market day on the Courthouse Square, looking West, 1877.*

On Mondays, particularly during the harvest season, the Courthouse square became a hub of commercial activity. Because the District Courts would generally begin the terms of court on the first Monday of the month, large numbers of people were in town for the trials: judges, lawyers, Courthouse personnel, litigants, witnesses and potential jurors, not to mention spectators. Since all had to be in attendance and since there was also usually a good deal of time lost waiting around for justice to be dispensed, "first Mondays" provided a natural opportunity for visiting, exhibiting, trading, selling and buying. All manner of merchandise - drummer's items, baled cotton and other farm produce, livestock, poultry and hound dogs - might be found at the Courthouse square.

5. *Second Tarrant County Courthouse at Fort Worth, Texas, 1883.*

Less than a decade after the completion of the new Courthouse, the fast-paced growth of the "Queen City of the Prairies" quickly outstripped the available space. This view shows the same Courthouse as #2, after additional construction and improvements were added following plans by local architect J. J. Kane. In 1882-1883, the Courthouse was remodeled with the addition of a mansard-roofed third floor containing four new courtrooms and a clocktower with four clocks, each eight feet in diameter. The new roof also addressed another problem which this courthouse shared with its successor - a persistently leaking roof.

6. *Skyline of Fort Worth, Texas, showing second County Courthouse, c. 1880.*

From a residence on Summit Avenue atop the bluff, Mrs. H.H. Campbell and son, Harry, of Matador, Texas are shown visiting with Fort Worth friends. The view shows the octagonal Courthouse and a number of multi-story brick buildings.

7. *Fort Worth, Texas, 1886.*

A panoramic perspective map by frontier cartographer Henry Wellge, lithographed by the American Publishing Company of Milwaukee. The detailed key provides an excellent guide to the "Queen City of the Prairies".

8. *Looking East from the Courthouse Square, Weatherford Street on right, Belknap on left, 1880.*

In the foreground is Rusk Street, literally a part of the cattle trail over which hundreds of thousands of cattle were driven, connecting with the Chisholm Trail in Southern Oklahoma, then north to the railheads in Kansas. In 1917, as Rusk Street became inextricably intertwined in the minds of the local populace with the lawlessness and debauchery of "Hell's Half Acre," and because of the high public esteem for the memory of General Thomas Jefferson Rusk, hero of San Jacinto, the street name was changed to Commerce Street.

9. *Perspective map of Fort Worth, Texas, 1891.*

This 1891 lithograph, also by Henry Wellge who drew the perspective map (#7 above), was distributed by the Fort Worth Land and Investment Company. Wellge obviously had to work far in advance of publication as this map shows the Spring Palace, pictured left center, although it had burned May 30, 1890, a year before.

10. *Members of the Commissioners Court and others on the front steps of the Courthouse on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone, March 17, 1894.*

Following a nationwide competition for architectural designs advertised by the Tarrant County Commissioners Court in 1893, eighteen firms from eight different states submitted entries. The architectural firm of Gunn & Curtiss from Kansas City won the competition. The style of the building is termed "Renaissance Revival," with its dominant towered mass and two wings, similar to both the state and national capitols.

During construction of the present Courthouse (1893-1895), the courts were relocated to a two-story building at Seventh and Rusk (now Commerce) Street. The building was later used by the Fort Worth Medical College, then the Siebold Hotel and Restaurant. Upon completion, even though the project had come in almost 20% under budget, the citizens of the county were so outraged by the perceived extravagance that, at the next election, the County Judge and the entire Commissioners Court were voted out of office.

Passing under the Rotunda, note the original water fountain.

11. *Members of the Commissioners Court and others on the clocktower on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone, March 17, 1894.*

The clock tower contains Seth Thomas clockworks and a huge bell cast by the Keneely Bell Company of Troy, New York. The Bell is mounted in a timber frame and is inscribed "*Tarrant County, June A. D. 1895, erected by Seth Thomas Clock Co.*" and "*Keneely Bell Company, Troy, N. Y., U. S. A.*"

12. Members of the Commissioners Court and others on top of the building on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone, March 17, 1894.

This view of the South side of the Courthouse, as well as numbers 10, 11, 40 and 45, were made by one of the Swartz brothers, John, David and Charles, well-known Fort Worth photographers of the late 19th century. It was John Swartz who took the famous photograph of Butch Cassidy, the Sundance Kid and Wild Bunch in Fort Worth in 1900.

13. Tarrant County Courthouse and Horse Fountain, circa 1896.

This watering trough, located on the southeast corner of the Courthouse lawn at the corner of Weatherford and Commerce, actually predates the current Courthouse by three years and was furnished to the county by the Womens Humane Association (forerunner of the present Humane Society) in 1892. With a base of Mineral Wells limestone and an octagonal shaft of red Pecos sandstone, the fountain boasted three water troughs for animals and a drinking fountain for two-legged visitors. It was later topped by a bronze horse statue that became affectionately known as "Old Dobbin".

14. Courtroom in Tarrant County Courthouse, circa 1895 to 1900.

Tarrant County's first court convened in the store run by Henry Daggett on the bluff above the Trinity in November 1850, almost a year after the county was legally established and well before the county seat was established or a courthouse built. Judge Oran M. Roberts of Tyler, of the Fifth Judicial District (later Governor of Texas), sat as a visiting judge for Judge Bennett H. Martin, whose Ninth Judicial District encompassed Tarrant County. Until 1884, Tarrant County shared judicial districts with other counties, then, in that year, the Seventeenth District Court, R. E. Beckham presiding, was created. The Forty-Eighth District Court was established in 1891 with N. A. Stedman on the bench. W. T. Simmons was the first judge of the Sixty-seventh District Court in 1907 and Hal S. Lattimore first presided as judge over the Ninety-sixth District Court from its beginning in 1923.

15. Fort Worth, Texas, looking towards Courthouse from atop City Hall at 9th and Throckmorton, circa 1897.

Before the oil boom added several of the early skyscrapers to the Fort Worth skyline.

16. Flower Parade and Festival on Main Street looking towards Courthouse, May 1900.

In the words of Fort Worth newspaper editor B. B. Paddock: "social pleasures increase and multiply as refinement ploughs its way into rugged western life." Fort Worth's Flower Parade and Festival of May 1900 proceeded from the Courthouse South down Main Street to the Texas and Pacific Terminal. Local merchants and individuals festooned buggies, hacks and wagons with fresh flowers competing for awards.

17. World War I military unit in review, Southwest of Tarrant County Courthouse, Circa 1918.

The largest crowd ever assembled in Texas at the time thronged to Fort Worth as over 400,000 people watched the "Fighting Panthers" of the 36th Division parade through downtown on April 11, 1918. Led by Major General Edwin St. John Greble, the parade rolled down Main Street from the Courthouse to the T&P passenger depot. Some three months later, 20,000 of the "T-patchers" shipped out after ten months training to the European front - "Over There".

18. Cars and wagon on Paddock Viaduct, north of the Tarrant County Courthouse, 1936.

Built in 1914, the Paddock viaduct was named for B. B. Paddock, editor of the Fort Worth *Democrat* and later Mayor. It was the first bridge over the Trinity adequate for the needs of the growing population. Designed by the St. Louis firm of Brenneke and Fay, the viaduct was the first reinforced concrete arch in the nation to use self-supporting reinforced steel. Designated a Texas Historical Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

19. *Fort Worth and the Courthouse from 6th and Taylor Streets, 1936.*

In the right foreground is the Central Christian Church. The billboard ringing the parking lot advertised orchestra leader Cab Calloway performing at the Worth Theater on Seventh at Taylor.

20. *Street Repairman at the Horse Fountain, 1940.*

As progress brought automobiles and a diminished need for horse troughs, the statue and water trough fell victim to the times. "Old Dobbin," the horse statue, was removed and later lost. The sandstone arches were removed and the base alone preserved. The inscription, attributed to Scots poet Robert Burns, expresses affection and respect for the horse, an essential part of nineteenth century life.

21. *Lighted Aluminum Flag on the Courthouse Dome, 1954.*

In the late 1940s, the dome of the Courthouse, kept dark under a blackout order for the duration of World War Two, was illuminated with red, white and blue neon tubing. The 1,250-pound electrified American flag, complete with over 775 lights, boasted 48 stars. The flag was removed in 1959, just as Alaska and Hawaii became the 49th and 50th states.

22. *Courthouse restoration in progress on the second floor, 1982.*

With so many small remodelings over the years, the Courthouse was in danger of becoming irrelevant and outdated. A proposal was even made to tear down the Courthouse to allow Main Street traffic to pass unimpeded through town. Efforts to preserve the Courthouse gained ground when, in 1969, recognition as an official Texas Historical Landmark came. The Courthouse was later placed in the National Register of Historic Places. Finally, in 1980, Tarrant County voters passed a \$3 million bond issue, marking the beginning point for actual restoration. In December 1983, a completely restored and remodeled Courthouse was again ready to serve the people of Tarrant County. Features preserved throughout the building include the brass vertical faceplates - castings

of the originals in use since 1895 - and the cast bronze door-knobs with the unique Tarrant County "TC" signature. The decorative iron grills of the original ventilating system are now used in conjunction with the centralized heating and cooling system. The courtrooms have been carefully restored from early photographs with their elaborate barristers (from which we get the term *bar*: the division of the courtroom from the public to the "business" part of the courtroom), judge's benches and backdrops.

23. Reenactment of 1894 photograph of the County Commissioners and other officials on the Courthouse steps, September 19, 1983.

This portrait, taken on the South steps, is similar to No. 10 and was a part of the celebration of the restoration of the Courthouse in 1983. Pictured left to right, are: **First Row:** County Commissioner B. D. Griffin (Precinct 4), Judge Tom Cave (213th District Court); **Second Row:** Judge Pete Perez (County Criminal Court No. 4), Justice of the Peace Manuel Valdez (Precinct 5), Judge Robert L. Wright (325th District Court), County Clerk Madrin Huffman, Judge L. Clifford Davis (Criminal District Court No. Two), Judge Albert L. White, Jr. (236th District Court); **Third Row:** County Commissioner A. Lyn Gregory (Precinct 3), County Commissioner Dick Andersen (Precinct 1), County Commissioner S. J. Stovall (Precinct 2), Judge William H. Brigham (County Court at Law No. 1), Judge John G. Hill (322nd District Court); **Fourth Row:** Judge Robert M. Burnett (Probate Court No. 1), Scott D. Moore (323rd District Court), Judge Brian A. Carper (324th District Court), County Judge Mike Moncrief (on pediment), Harold L. Valderas (233rd District Court), Judge George A. Crowley (67th District Court); **Fifth Row:** Judge Maryellen W. Hicks (231st District Court), Judge Patrick W. Ferchill (Probate Court No. 2), Judge Charles Dickens (297th District Court), Judge Andrew L. Vogel (County Court at Law No. 2); **Sixth Row:** Judge James E. Wright (141st District Court), District Clerk Jim Boorman, Judge William L. Hughes, Jr. (48th District Court), Judge Michael D. Schattman (348th District Court), Judge Sidney C. Farrar, Jr. (153th District Court), Courthouse Restoration Architect Ward Bogard, Judge Joe Bruce Cunningham (342nd District Court).

Ascending the staircase, note the “coffin corners” and slate treads on the steps. Originally wooden, the staircase treads were replaced with slate generations ago. These had worn so badly by the early 1980s as to be unsafe.

Second Floor

At the top of the steps is County Court at Law No. 2. The East and West courtrooms, now the home of Tarrant County Probate Courts One and Two, respectively, were originally the locations for the 17th District Court and the 96th District Court, large public spaces with galleries and forty-foot ceilings. County Court at Law No. 3 is located on the South side of the second floor.

Throughout the building, note the “Egg and Dart” moulding, the corinthian columns and pediments. The bold colors of the building are, in many instances, matched from scrapings on the original plaster walls found under repeated repaintings. The window facings are painted in a verdigris green to match the natural patina of the copper dome and roofs.

24. Travelers watering trough at the farm of E. Frank Duringer, Burleson, Texas, circa 1896.

Frank Duringer's farm, located just north of Burleson in southern Tarrant County, was a frequent stopping place for Fort Worth-bound travelers, giving them an opportunity to water their horses and complete the last leg of their journey refreshed. Duringer was one of the first bankers in the Burleson community and built this home on land homesteaded by his parents in 1877.

25. *Rufus Chapman's Clover Farm Store and Crowley Post Office, Crowley, Texas, 1945.*

Founded in 1882 by the Santa Fe Railway and named for a Santa Fe engineer, by 1935 Crowley had a population of 290 and seven business establishments.

26. *House of James N. Benbrook, Benbrook, Texas, circa 1900.*

The Texas and Pacific railroad named its station Benbrook for James N. Benbrook (pictured center) when it reached the Marinda settlement in 1880. The community was later renamed Benbrook. Mr. Benbrook, an Indiana native, farmed in the western part of Tarrant County since 1876 despite heavy reliance on his crutches, the result of a hip injury suffered during the Civil War.

27. *Baling hay on the Willburn farm in Southwest Tarrant County, 1897.*

The Willburn family moved to Tarrant County in 1854, with all 11 children becoming farmers and stockraisers near Benbrook. E. C. D. Willburn, who trailed cattle to both Colorado and Mexico, was one of Benbrook's first inhabitants. In 1870, after driving a large drove of horses from Tarrant County to Mexico with 13 armed guards, he sold his stock interests and settled down to farming.

28. *Home of J. G. Reynolds, Azle, Texas, circa 1900.*

John Giles Reynolds came to eastern Parker County in 1854 from Tennessee, settling on a creek later known as Reynolds Branch. The house shown was built of plank lumber hauled from the Houston-Galveston area by ox caravan on a three-month trip. Reynolds, who built and operated a gin and gristmill, donated part of the land for the Azle Cemetery.

29. *Woman preparing tortillas at a community festival on the North Side, 1975.*

Once home to dozens of ethnic groups, Fort Worth's "North Side", as it is familiarly called, is now dominated by Hispanic culture. Varied restaurants, entrepreneurial enterprises and neighborhood cultural festivals enliven the lifestyle there.

30. *Longhorn Steer in the Stockyards, circa 1905.*

The Stockyards area of Fort Worth, north of the bluff and the Courthouse, became the focus of tremendous commercial activity as local merchants sought to make Fort Worth the “end” of the cattle trail, rather than merely a stop along the way. Fort Worth became a meat packing center in 1902 when two major packing companies, Swift and Company and Armour, built plants on the North Side. Within a decade, sixteen million head of livestock had passed through the Fort Worth Stockyards.

31. *Land Agency at the Clark Hotel Building, Main and Lancaster; house lots and farms for sale and rent, Fort Worth, Texas, circa 1880.*

As Fort Worth prospered, the demand for land surrounding Fort Worth also increased. Speculators bought up much of the surrounding property, selling it piecemeal or developing large tracts themselves. Many of Fort Worth’s most prominent names have also been property developers.

32. *Part of the skyline of the City of Fort Worth, Biggest City of its size in the United States, circa 1920’s.*

Following World War One, Fort Worth grew in physical area, in population and in expansion of industry. Many downtown landmarks, including the Hotel Texas, the Fort Worth Club Building, the Blackstone Hotel, the W. T. Waggoner Building, the Sinclair Building, the Electric Service Building, the Fair Building (now the Bank of Commerce and Oil and Gas Buildings) and the First Methodist Church all were built in the 1920s. The Great Depression brought the building boom to an end in 1929.

33. *Circus parade at 9th and Jones, Fort Worth, Texas, circa 1933.*

The first circus to come to Fort Worth was in July 1869. It pitched its tents where Stripling’s Department Store later stood. The opening day street parade shown here, once a fixture of circuses, had all but disappeared by the late 1920s. During the Depression, the public was so hungry for diversion that performances were usually packed.

34. *Birdville, Texas, first County Seat of Tarrant County, circa 1890's.*

After losing the county seat elections in 1856 and 1860, Birdville also lost much of its impetus for growth. By 1890, about the time this photograph was made, it was a forlorn and desolate place. Although Birdville no longer appears on Tarrant County maps, its name lives on in the Birdville Independent School District. Note the poster for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Pawnee Bill's Great Eastern Exposition.

35. *Delia Woolf's Mosier Valley Homestead, circa 1890's.*

Delia Woolf, seen in the left of this photograph, helped establish the community of Mosier Valley in Northeast Tarrant County. The settlement, founded during Reconstruction by freed slaves, drew many residents from the Mosier Plantation and other plantations in the area.

36. *Binder parade on Main Street of Grapevine, Texas, 1899.*

Local farmers parade their binders (early hay-baling machines) down Grapevine's Main Street. This photograph, made some eight years before Grapevine was incorporated, looks North from a hotel at the corner of Main and Worth Streets.

37. *Arlington, Texas, looking North on Center Street from South Street, circa 1912.*

Originally named Hayterville for the Presbyterian minister who settled here and established a post office in 1871, it was renamed Arlington in 1876 in honor of the home of General Robert E. Lee. It now boasts such worldwide attractions as Six Flags over Texas, the University of Texas at Arlington and The Ballpark in Arlington.

38. *Man and Feild Mill, Mansfield, Texas, circa 1890.*

Julian Feild arrived in Fort Worth in 1854 just as the Army's 2nd Dragoons were reassigned to Fort Belknap. Feild first

opened a general store in an abandoned army cabin, then in 1856, along with brother-in-law Ralph Man and friend David Mauck, built the city's first gristmill a few hundred yards west of the junction of the Clear and West forks of the Trinity River. In 1859, Feild and Man moved their milling operation South a few miles to property Feild had purchased and changed the mill from water power to steam, no doubt to insure mill operation in the periods when the Trinity River ran too low to operate the mill wheel. The town of Mansfield, named for Man and Feild (with a respelled name) grew up around the new mill. The grist mill supplied grain to the Confederacy during the Civil War and later supplied U. S. troops in West Texas at Forts Concho and Griffin.



Third Floor

The third floor, really more of a mezzanine level, was added in the early 1940's as the continuing need for additional space pressed upon county officials. It houses offices of the Court of Appeals, the Mental Health/ Probate Clerk's Offices and storage areas. No photographs are displayed on the third floor.



Fourth Floor

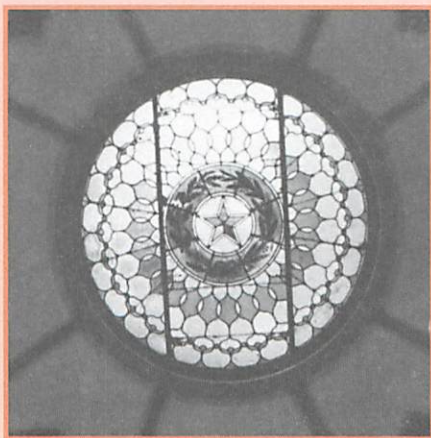
Tarrant County Law Library

To the right at the top of the stairs is the Tarrant County Law Library. This library was established in 1944 following the creation of a county law library system in Texas. The forty-five thousand volume collection is the largest public law library in Tarrant County, with two branch collections at local colleges.

The ceiling in the law library is an adaptation of the original forty-foot ceiling of the 17th District Court located on the second floor, which also had a balcony on three sides. The ceilings of the two district courtrooms were lowered when steel spans were installed to add a third floor to the Courthouse, providing additional storage and office space for other county offices.

Rotunda Interior Dome

The interior dome is located at a height of 110 feet from the floor of the rotunda. The rotunda openings below the interior dome are offset some fourteen feet from the center of the exterior dome and are elliptical in shape to allow for better circulation of both air and people. The stained glass *oculus* with the seal of the county measures six feet in diameter. Around the interior of the dome are decorative relief plaster designs, signed in blue by the artist Fred Stanfield on the



right hand side of the central urn-like ornament of the narrow panel just to the North of West. Above the rotunda dome is the clock tower and belfry of the Courthouse (not open to the public).

In 1945, as a part of an effort to secure more office space in the Courthouse, both the second and fourth floor openings over the rotunda were floored over and the West grand staircase removed for elevators. Not only was the majestic view of the interior dome lost, but also the advanced air circulation design, pioneered by the original architects some fifty years before, was destroyed.

To the East and West of the rotunda are two additional openings with ornate railings with rectangular skylights. Additional circular skylights are in the center of the Law Library and in the foyer of the Court of Appeals offices.

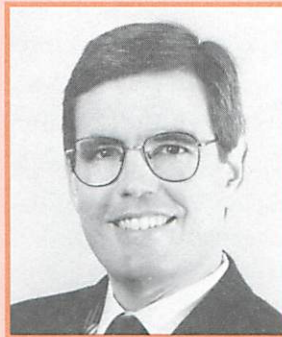
Second Court of Appeals

Originally, all appeals from trial courts in the state were handled by the Texas Supreme Court. An increasingly crowded docket forced the establishment of intermediate appeals courts to relieve the congestion. In 1892, the Texas Legislature established the Second Supreme Judicial District, covering 118 counties from Louisiana to New Mexico and including the Texas Panhandle. Geographic and population changes resulted in several redefinitions of the Second Judicial District until, in 1929, it reached its current configuration, comprising the twelve counties of Archer, Clay, Cooke, Denton, Hood, Jack, Montague, Parker, Tarrant, Wichita, Wise and Young. As each session of the Court of Appeals convenes, a panel of three black-robed Justices considers the appeals of those who have lost in the trial courts.

After almost a century of largely unnoticed service to the people of Texas, the business of the Second Court of Appeals was tragically interrupted on July 1, 1992 when a spectator in the Court of Appeals courtroom, George Lott, drew a gun and began firing. Two attorneys, Chris Marshall, Chief of the Tarrant County District Attorney's Appellate Division, who was in the courtroom observing oral argument, and Dallas lawyer John J. Edwards, attending the session of court to argue an appeal, were both killed. Three others were wounded in the attack: Chief Justice John Hill and retired Justice Clyde Ashworth, both serving on that day's appeal panel, and Tarrant County Assistant District Attorney Steven Conder. Lott received the death penalty and was executed by lethal injection in 1994. The South Courtroom, used by the 2nd Court of Appeals for oral argument, is one of the the most beautiful in the state and is often featured in television and film.



*Chris Marshall -
1950 - 1994*



*John J. Edwards -
1958 - 1994*

39. Judge James Tracy Morehead, Chief Justice of Tarrant County, 1854-1856, circa 1870's.

James Tracy Morehead, who succeeded Seabourne Gilmore as the county's second Chief Justice (County Judge), sat at the Courthouse in Birdville during its brief tenure as County seat. In January 1855, Morehead received the first list of 280 Tarrant County residents eligible for jury service. Many of the potential jurors had come to the area as part of the Peters Colony. Also serving the county at that time were County Commissioners James Joyce, Green H. Minter, C. C. McKinney and I. L. Purvis; County Clerk Benjamin P. Ayres; District Clerk William Quayle and Sheriff John York.

40. Middleton Tate Johnson, Interim County Commissioner, 1849-1850, circa 1850's.

Middleton Tate Johnson, an Alabama native and friend of both Andrew Jackson and Sam Houston, served in the Alabama legislature at age twenty-two. Commander of Federal volunteer troops located at Johnson's Station in present-day Arlington, Johnson helped the 2nd Dragoons locate the site of Camp Worth, the current site of the Courthouse. Johnson County was named for him in 1854 after his unsuccessful bid for governor.

41. Captain E. M. Daggett, circa 1870's.

Ephriam Merrill Daggett was born in Canada in 1810 and worked as an Indian trader in Chicago in the 1830's. Making his way to Texas in 1840, he fought in the Mexican War and served Shelby County, Texas in the state legislature before settling in Tarrant County in 1854. He originally ran a boarding house located in one of the old cavalry stables in the abandoned fort, later known as Steele's Tavern. Daggett is frequently referred to as the "Father of Fort Worth" for his many contributions to the developing city. His likeness was a part of the official seal of the City of Fort Worth for a number of years.

42. John Peter Smith, circa 1880's.

John Peter Smith, a Kentucky emigrant in 1853, was not only the city's first school teacher, but also was extremely active in

civic and business affairs. Admitted to the bar in 1860, he delayed his practice of law to serve the Confederacy, helping to raise a company of 120 Tarrant County men for Sibley's Brigade in 1861. Twice Mayor of Fort Worth (1882-1885 and 1890-1891), he helped organize a bank, a gas light company, a street railway, the first tax-supported school system and Board of Trade and donated land for parks, cemeteries and hospitals, one of which was later named John Peter Smith Hospital.

43. Dr. Benjamin Franklin Barkley, County Judge, 1867-1873, and Birdville, Texas, attorney and physician, circa 1870's.

Although a Union sympathizer, Barkley remained in Tarrant County during the war to treat those whose loyalties fell on both sides of the conflict. Because Barkley remained faithful to the Union, he was appointed County Judge in 1867 following the ruling that removed all Confederate sympathizers from office.

North Courtroom

The North courtroom on the fourth floor was unique in the state at the time of construction for its floor is suspended by steel tension columns hung from a truss in the attic of the building, rather than being supported by columns from below. The courtroom was one of the few public spaces of its kind outside of the Northeast before the 20th century to employ this method of construction. This floor system remains intact and strong today.

44. C.C. Cummings, County Judge, 1876-1880, 1894

After the ouster of the Reconstruction government in 1872, Confederate veteran C. C. Cummings was elected County Judge in 1876. He was often called the "Redeemer Judge" because his election returned power to the hands of those who had been disenfranchised following the Civil War. He

was known as a prolific writer of history and flowery poems and a longtime leader of the Confederate Veterans Organization in Tarrant County.

45. *Old settlers and the date they came to Fort Worth, top row, left to right: Howard W. Peak, 1856; Captain J.C. Terrell, 1857; Dan Parker, 1858; bottom row: Captain Sam Woody, 1850; Captain Ed Terrell, 1843; Richard King, 1854, circa 1900.*

This photograph, taken by Charles L. Swartz, was made at a Courthouse celebration given by Fort Worth friends of Edward S. Terrell in honor of his 93rd birthday, May 24, 1905. **Howard W. Peak**, son of Dr. Carroll Peak, the city's first physician, was the first and only child born in the abandoned fort buildings, in a vacated officer's home. As a child, Indians in the area believed Howard Peak to have supernatural powers because of his red hair. As an adult, he became a travelling salesman across West Texas - on horseback, by buggy and by airplane. **Captain J. C. Terrell** came to Fort Worth in 1857 after an number of years wandering the gold fields of California as a young man. He located his law office at First and Main, property which he owned for more than 50 years. He recruited a company that became part of Waller's Battalion during the Civil War and served as its captain, declining promotions several times to remain with his men. He served several terms as President of the Old Settlers Association of Tarrant County. **Dan Parker** was a Confederate veteran who lived east of Birdville, in what is now Hurst. Parker was of the same family as Cynthia Ann Parker and Chief Quanah Parker. He was later appointed County Clerk by Union authorities during the Reconstruction era. **Sam Woody** played a conspicuous part in the early county seat contest between Birdville and Fort Worth in November 1856. Although at the time of the election he had recently moved to Parker County, he brought fourteen other friends in from the county to the west and, waiting until the last moment before the polls closed, brought in 15 votes for Fort Worth as the county seat. Since Fort Worth won the election by only seven votes, Woody certainly felt that he had contributed to the success of Fort Worth! **Ed Terrell** was a trader from Arkansas who, along with John P. Lusk, attempted

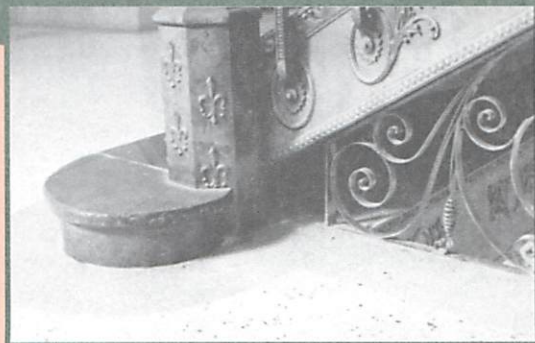
to establish a trading post on the Clear Fork of the Trinity in 1843-4. Terrell participated with Sam Houston in the negotiation of the Bird's Fort Treaty in 1843. Among Terrell's many vocations were the drug business with Dr. Carroll Peak (1856); saloonkeeper (operating the First and Last Chance Saloon just West off the Courthouse square); and first City Marshall of Fort Worth (April-October 1873).

Richard King and his brother Billy came with the Kentucky-Tennessee Colony in 1854, many of whose colonists settled in the area now known as White Settlement. The two brothers King established a blacksmith shop known as King's Foundry.

46. James J. Scott, Tarrant County Commissioner, 1888-1892, 1895

Scott, a native of Shelby County, Tennessee, came to Panola County, Texas in 1847 and then to Tarrant County in 1856 to homestead on vacant lands in the Mississippi and Pacific Railroad Reserve some 9 miles South of Fort Worth. A freighter by trade, he also ran cattle and farmed. Scott served in Griffin's Battalion in the Civil War and participated in engagements at Galveston, Houston and Sabine Pass. He was elected County Commissioner in 1888 and 1890 and also served as a delegate to two Texas Democratic Conventions in 1882 and 1888.

Fireplace Poker Behind you, notice the tool or fireplace poker handle which has been worked into the wrought iron design of the stair railing. Certainly an interesting way to sign one's work!



47. *John Lewis Mock, Tarrant Commissioner, 1892-1894, circa 1900.*

Mock was one of the county officials turned out of office by outraged voters upon the completion of the present Courthouse. Even though Courthouse construction came in under budget, it was perceived as extravagant, given the depressed economy of the era. The Courthouse controversy, as well as other political issues of the day such as a county hospital and women's suffrage, brought about the ouster of the entire Commissioners Court.

48. *Elisha Adam Eules, center, Tarrant County Sheriff; 1892-1900, with his deputies and the jail cook, circa 1895.*

A native of Bedford County, Tennessee, Eules came to Tarrant County in 1870. Active in the local Democratic Party, he was elected Precinct 3 Constable in 1876 and Sheriff of Tarrant County in 1892 and again in 1894. His farm, a few miles northeast of Fort Worth, gave the City of Eules its name. Eules is pictured fifth from right with his deputies and the jailhouse cook. His son, Marvin Eules, is second from left.

49. *William Madison "Gooseneck Bill" McDonald, circa 1925.*

"Gooseneck Bill" McDonald was a political and business leader in the black community of Tarrant County. His ability to unite black and white voters led to his prominence as a leader of the "Black and Tan" faction of the Republican Party in Texas in the early 1900s. McDonald was active in Black Masonic societies, a founder of the Fraternal Bank and Trust Company and an active civic leader.

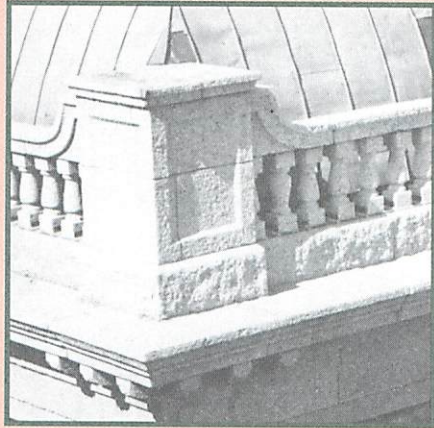


Courthouse Grounds

Inverted Baluster

Note that the second baluster from the west on the south side of the west balustrade was installed upside down.

Apparently, the contractor had a real sense of humor. A unique signature. Bars over the windows on different floors were for holding cells for prisoners transported to the Courthouse for trial, with a separate area for women.



Edward H. Tarrant Monument

(front lawn West/left of front steps)

“U.S.D. 1812, 1784, 1815 Tarrant County, organized August 5, 1850, named for General Edward H. Tarrant. Born 1796, died at Fort Belknap 1858, Veteran of War of 1812, active in battle of New Orleans, Veteran of Texas of War of Independence 1836, Commander of Ranger forces of northwest frontier 1837. Representative from Red River district in Congress of Texas Republic in 1838. General of Texas Militia defeating Indians at Village Creek in 1841. Donated by business leaders of Fort Worth. In grateful appreciation this marker is erected by the Gen. Edward H. Tarrant Chapter & Tarrant County Historical Society under the auspices of the National Society United States Daughters of 1812, State of Texas, May 18, 1949.

Flagpole marker

(West/left of front steps)

“Dedicated to Forrest Markward, Attorney at Law, gentleman of the old school, lest we forget.”

Dedicated December 20, 1994, the two 40-foot bronzed steel flagpoles were donated by the Fort Worth law firm of McLean and Sanders, with whom Attorney Markward practiced for a number of years. Well known for his genteel manner, Mr. Markward had been practicing law in Tarrant County for over 56 years at the time of the dedication. Mr. Markward's sister, Del DeHay, was for many years the librarian of the County Law Library. The Library is named in honor of Ms. DeHay.

Memorial Markers

(East/right of front steps and continuing East)

“1861-1865, In memory of Confederate soldiers, 1861-1865 and their descendents who served in Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, erected by Julia Jackson Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1953.”

“POW MIA - You are not forgotten; we the people remember. You are known to God, December 25, 1988, God and the Soldier We Adore, Pete Najera family.”

“Tarrant County Firefighters Association, ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,’ John 15:13. To the men and women of the fire service who give their lives serving the citizens of Tarrant County, Texas, dedicated this 4th day of November 1990, Tarrant County Fire Fighters Association, its officers and members.”

Horse Fountain

(Northwest corner, Weatherford and Commerce Streets):

Erected by the Womens Humane Association, Mrs. Drew Pruitt, President, 1892.

*“Gude Masters a’ his weel-earned due
ye humble beastie gie;
Justice and mercy’s blessings flow
nae less for him than ye.”*

Paddock Park

North of the Courthouse, named for B.B. (Buckley Boardman) Paddock, who came to Fort Worth in 1872 after serving as one of the youngest officers in the Confederate Army. Major Van Zandt hired him to edit the Fort Worth *Democrat* and Paddock later bought the newspaper. His editorials urged needed improvements for Fort Worth including paved streets, fire and sanitary improvements and the coming of the railroad. It was Paddock who published the famed “Tarantula” map, drawn by I. C. Terry, Fort Worth City Engineer, showing Fort Worth as the hub of numerous rail lines. He served Fort Worth as its mayor and as a state legislator.

Location of Tarrant County Jail, 1884 - 1918

Located in what is now Paddock Park, the old Jail was the scene of the last execution by hanging in Tarrant County. At the time the Jail was in use here, the District Courts in the Courthouse heard both criminal and civil cases. A tunnel connected the Jail to the Courthouse leading from the Jail, under Belknap Street, with steps that lead directly into the 67th District Courtroom. In this manner, prisoners could be transported between

Court and the lockup without the increased likelihood of escape or mob violence. The gallows in the old jail were last used November 8, 1918. The Criminal Courts Building, located just to the West, opened September 4, 1918, and housed the offices for the Criminal Courts, the Sheriff and the Jail, but the gallows had not been completed when it came time to carry out the death sentence on the last man to be executed in Tarrant County. Rufus Coates was hung in the abandoned County Jail on the bluff on November 8, 1918, sentenced to death for the murder of his sweetheart, Zella Faulk, whom he stabbed under a tree near Oakwood Cemetery, visible from the window of his jail cell. In 1923, the state installed an electric chair in the Penitentiary in Huntsville and required executions to be carried out there.

Charles Tandy Statue

Located in Paddock Park is a statue of Charles Tandy, erected in 1982. Tandy greatly expanded the family leather business, begun in 1918 and made Tandy Corporation and its subsidiaries - Radio Shack, Tandy Leather, Color Tile and others - household names. Mr. Tandy died in 1978.

*Charles Tandy
1918-1878
given in loving memory
by many friends,
The Tandy Corporation
his wife Anne Burnett Tandy
and his stepdaughter, Anne W. Philips*

• • •

The Tarrant County Courthouse now serves a Tarrant County population more than twenty times as large as when the pink granite Courthouse was built 100 years ago. Hopefully this tour has helped you to better imagine our past, understand our present and envision our future.

- October, 1995

A Word of Thanks

Sincere thanks to Jim Duff for the layout and design work, to Tad Howington for the vital help in the early stages of the research, to Peggy Martindale and Carol Baker for proof-reading and "proof-testing" this tour booklet, to Dee Barker for her insight and passion for historical accuracy, and to Robert Parten and the Elections Administration Office for their generous support of this venture.



Register and Vote