

= History of Dallas (1874 ? 1929) =

The history of Dallas , Texas , United States from 1874 to 1929 documents the city 's rapid growth and emergence as a major center for transportation , trade and finance . Originally a small community built around agriculture , the convergence of several railroads made the city a strategic location for several expanding industries . During the time , Dallas prospered and grew to become the most populous city in Texas , lavish steel and masonry structures replaced timber constructions , Dallas Zoo , Southern Methodist University , and an airport were established . Conversely , the city suffered multiple setbacks with a recession from a series of failing markets (the " Panic of 1893 ") and the disastrous flooding of the Trinity River in the spring of 1908 .

= = Shift to industry = =

The shift towards manufacturing and heavy industry in Dallas formed partially out of problems hurting Dallas area cotton farmers . After purchasing supplies on credit during the year , farmers owed merchants most of their crop , whose price was lowered by the high shipping costs to the port of Galveston . Worldwide cotton prices were low , due to overproduction . The Farmers ' Alliance , created in 1877 , hoped to help farmers by setting up a Dallas warehouse to ship cotton to St. Louis . However , bankers refused to finance the warehouse , and the venture failed within twenty months .

There was little manufacturing in Dallas . The city began to light its streets with gas lamps in 1874 and began to brick over dirt lanes . In 1880 , the first telephone switchboard came to Dallas , linking the water company and the fire station . In 1885 , the Main Street was lit with electricity . In 1888 , the Dallas Zoo opened as the first zoo in the state . In 1890 , Dallas annexed the geographically @-@ larger city of East Dallas , making it the most populous city in Texas .

= = Panic of 1893 = =

Following the national financial " Panic of 1893 " , numerous business failed , including five local banks . Cotton prices dipped below five cents a pound , and the lumber and flour markets weakened .

By 1898 however , the city began to recover and grow again . Restored growth invigorated the skilled workers , who joined trade unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor , which granted a charter to the Trades Assembly of Dallas in 1899 to coordinate local activity and prevent jurisdictional disputes .

In 1894 , Parkland Memorial Hospital opened just west of Oak Lawn . In 1903 , Oak Cliff , a city across the Trinity River , was annexed . The same year , the Wilson Building , patterned after Paris ' Grand Opera House , opened on Main Street in downtown .

By the turn of the century Dallas was the leading wholesale market in the entire Southwestern United States for many products . More important it became the world center for the cotton trade . It led the world in the manufacturing of saddlery and cotton gin machinery . As it further entered the 20th century , Dallas built up a major presence in banking and insurance .

= = Progressive reform = =

Progressive Era reformers sought to improve municipal government by such changes as the commission system , city planning , and zoning controls . The interests of white business and residential districts were protected , but sometimes at the expense of blacks who lived in segregated neighborhoods . Fairbanks (1999) explores the changing assumptions about city planning and government among the city 's leaders . Dissatisfied with its haphazard development they endorsed centralized planning and wrote and secured the adoption of a new charter and set up a board of commissioners . The commission structure , however , caused government officials to view the city in separate parts rather than as a whole . By the 1920s supporters of comprehensive planning were

calling for a program that included adoption of council @-@ manager government , a citywide zoning policy , and public funds for improvements in parks , sewers , schools , and city streets . Voters approved the bond proposals and charter amendments in 1927 and 1930 . Dallas thus achieved a more coordinated government which was theoretically more aware of the city 's needs and more able to treat those needs equally for the benefit of the city as a whole .

= = Self image = =

The city 's fathers originally depicted Dallas as southern in order to rationalize slavery and opposition to Reconstruction , but this discouraged Northern investment and the political support of wealthy northern migrants to the city . From the 1870s on , Dallas leaders portrayed the city as southwestern , or later as part of the " Sunbelt " , in order to incorporate wealthy non @-@ southern whites , including Jews , into society . For example , between 1852 and 1925 the seven Sanger brothers built successful mercantile businesses along developing railroad lines , including the Sanger Bros. department store , and occupied numerous city and state government posts . White blue collar workers were marginalized , and even more so the Mexican Americans , and blacks .

= = Gender = =

Women did much to establish the fundamental elements of the social structure of the city , focusing their energies on families , schools , and churches during the city 's pioneer days . Many of the organizations which created a modern urban scene were founded and led by middle class women . Through voluntary organizations and club work , they connected their city to national cultural and social trends . By the 1880s women in temperance and suffrage movements shifted the boundaries between private and public life in Dallas by pushing their way into politics in the name of social issues .

During 1913 @-@ 19 , advocates of woman suffrage drew on the educational and advertising techniques of the national parties and the lobbying tactics of the women 's club movement . They also tapped into popular culture , successfully using popular symbolism and traditional ideals to adapt community festivals and social gatherings to the task of political persuasion . The Dallas Equal Suffrage Association developed a suffrage campaign based on social values and community standards . Community and social occasions served as recruiting opportunities for the suffrage cause , blunting its radical implications with the familiarity of customary events and dressing it in the values of traditional female behavior , especially propriety .

Women of color usually operated separately . Juanita Craft (1902 ? 85) was a leader in the civil rights movement through the Dallas NAACP . She focused on working with black youths , organizing them as the vanguard in protests against segregation practices in Texas .

= = 1908 flood = =

The relationship between Dallas and the Trinity River was never as healthy as Dallasites had hoped for . Dallas 's establishment on the banks of the Trinity was done with hopes that navigation south to the Trinity and Galveston Bays , and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico , would be realized . However , attempts to even move paddleboats up and down the river proved futile , and plans to transform the river into a canal never came to fruition . The Trinity also suffered from chronic flooding : floods occurred in 1844 , 1866 , 1871 , and 1890 , but none were as severe as the flood of 1908 . On May 26 , 1908 , the Trinity River reached a depth of 52 @.@ 6 feet (16 @.@ 03 m) and a width of 1 @.@ 5 miles (2 @.@ 4 km) . Five people died , 4 @, @ 000 were left homeless , and property damages were estimated at \$ 2 @.@ 5 million .

Dallas was without power for three days , all telephone and telegraph service was down , and rail service was canceled . The only way to reach Oak Cliff was by boat . West Dallas was hit harder than any other part of the city ? the Dallas Times Herald said " indescribable suffering " plagued the area . Much to the horror of residents , thousands of livestock drowned in the flood and some

became lodged in the tops of trees ? the stench of their decay hung over the city as the water subsided .

= = Flood control = =

After the disastrous flood , the city wanted to find a way to control the reckless Trinity and to build a bridge linking Oak Cliff and Dallas . The immediate reaction was citizens and the city clamoring to build an indestructible , all @-@ weather crossing over the Trinity . This had already been attempted following the 1890 flood ? the result was the " Long Wooden Bridge , " that connected Jefferson Boulevard in Oak Cliff and Cadiz in Dallas , but the unstable wooden structure was washed swiftly away by the 1908 flood . George B. Dealey , publisher of the Dallas Morning News , proposed a 1 @.@ 5 miles (2 @.@ 4 km) concrete bridge similar to one crossing the Missouri River in Kansas City . Ultimately a US \$ 650 @,@ 000 bond election was approved and in 1912 , the Oak Cliff viaduct (now the Houston Street viaduct) was opened among festivities drawing 58 @,@ 000 spectators . The bridge , at the time , was the longest concrete structure in the world .

Efforts beyond this had begun in 1911 when George Kessler , a city planner , created a plan for both the Trinity and the city . His plans included using levees to divert the river , removing railroad lines on Pacific Avenue , consolidating train depots into a central station , new parks and playgrounds , and the straightening and widening of several streets . Most of his plans lay unimplemented , but in later years , many began to see its importance . In 1920 , Kessler was brought back to update his plan and by the 1930s many of his plans had been realized .

= = Financial center = =

Efforts began in 1910 to have Southwestern University in Georgetown relocate to Dallas . The school refused , but this action brought Dallas to the attention of the Methodists . They voted in 1911 to establish a university in Dallas , after the city offered \$ 300 @,@ 000 and 666 @.@ 5 acres (2 @.@ 70 km²) of land for the campus . In 1915 , Southern Methodist University opened and is still operational today .

In 1911 , Dallas became the location of the eleventh regional branch of the Federal Reserve Bank . The city had campaigned to have it located in Dallas for years , and the bank 's arrival assured Dallas 's place as a major financial center .

In 1912 , The Adolphus Hotel was constructed in downtown Dallas . The Beaux Arts style building , at twenty @-@ one stories and 312 feet (95 m) was the tallest building in Texas at the time . It officially opened on October 5 , 1912 . In August 1922 , the 29 @-@ story Magnolia Petroleum Building (now the Magnolia Hotel) opened next door and took the title of tallest @-@ in @-@ Texas .

Aviation became a popular topic in World War I. Love Field was established as an aviation training ground , and Fair Park was the home of Camp Dick , a training facility as well . The city purchased Love Field in 1927 to use as a municipal airport .