

FRISCO HERITAGE TIMES

Heritage Association of Frisco

8/1/2020

Edition 2, Volume 8

Researching, Preserving, and Sharing Frisco's Rich History

www.friscoheritage.org

FRISCO'S 8TH DECADE

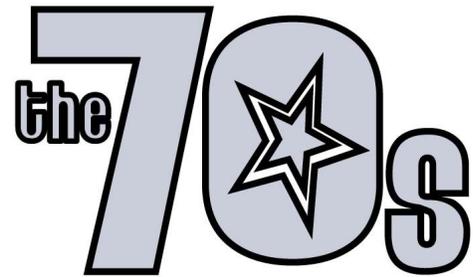
1970-1979

The 70s in Frisco

The 1970s began in America where the 1960s left off—a nation at war abroad and civil unrest at home. Turmoil over the expanding Vietnam War escalated in May 1970 when 13 students protesting the war at Kent State University in Ohio were shot by members of the National Guard. Four of the students died and the tide of public opinion turned against the war.

The break-out stars of the 60s, the British Fab Four—The Beatles—broke up in 1970.

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew resigned on October 10, 1973 over allegations that he had accepted kickbacks and bribes as Governor of Maryland and in his position as vice president. At that time, the House Minority Leader, Gerald R. Ford, was nominated by President Richard M. Nixon to fill the role of Vice President. Ford was confirmed first by the Senate and then by the House becoming Vice President in December 1973. The Watergate Scandal in 1972 would ultimately cause President Nixon to resign from office effective at noon on August 9, 1974 rather than go through an impeachment. When Nixon resigned, Ford was sworn in as the 38th President of the United States at 12:05 p.m. becoming the only unelected president in US history.



In 1976 America celebrated its Bicentennial with a birthday party from sea to shining sea.

HAVE A NICE DAY



The 1970s saw the end of the Vietnam War, the invention of the first cellular phone, the passing of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin—who both performed at Woodstock in 1969—and Elvis Presley. The world's first test-tube baby was born. America watched as Archie and Edith Bunker sat down at a piano and belted out “*those were the days*” while The Jeffersons moved on up to the east side. We sailed on The Love Boat and escaped to Fantasy Island. The Brady Bunch showcased a blended family and The Partridge Family featured a single mom. Saturday Night Fever made disco dancing all the rage. The Star Wars franchise began, and the “Force” has endured for more than four decades. Seventies fads included disco, CB radios, bell bottoms, afros, mood rings, smiley faces, and pet rocks.

In Frisco, the population grew by 85% from 1,845 in 1970 to 3,420 by 1980. This continuing growth was anticipated by Frisco's leadership who annexed land to expand the footprint of Frisco and prepared for the future by fighting for water rights. We'll revisit that story along with several others that marked Frisco's growth in the 70s. We welcomed home Vietnam POW Lt. Carroll Beeler and said farewell to the last businesses in the early towns of Rock Hill and Lebanon. Frisco commemorated the Bicentennial with the first book detailing its own 74-year history and opened The Steel Wheel Museum in a caboose. In 1978 Hollywood came calling and a 5-episode mini-series was filmed on the Box Ranch and in various locations around town. It became a TV series with a permanent home out in Parker, Texas. Some of you may remember the Ewing family and a little show called DALLAS.

FISD Builds First New Dedicated High School Since 1922

BONDS APPROVED LAST MONTH

Frisco School Enrollment Will Approach 1,000 Mark

FRISCO — Plans for a new building program are underway in the Frisco Independent School District.

Plans call for constructing and equipping a new high school, renovating the existing facility, and weather conditioning the elementary school.

A \$1.27 million school bond, passed by Frisco voters in late July, will cover cost of the program.

Frisco voters had twice turned down plans for a school building program, both times by narrow margins.

The new building plan is totally different from the first two plans. With the exception of athletic, vocational and agriculture facilities, the program calls for all facilities to be under the same roof and built around a "learning center."

Original plans called for a campus style school.

With completion of the new high school, the existing one will be converted into a middle school to house grades five through eight.

R. T. Smith is beginning his eighth year as superintendent of the Frisco ISD. He previously served as superintendent in Eula, Millsap, Shallowater and Post. He holds a BA in school administration from Hardin-Simmons University and a Master's degree in school administration from Texas Christian University.

Bill Darland is beginning his fourth year as principal of the high school and Bert Isbell is beginning his 10th year as elementary school principal.

The school's 41 teachers will report to school for in-service work Aug. 16. Approximately 950 students are expected to enroll when classes begin Aug. 23 and about 20 students will enroll in the kindergarten program offered for the first time this year.

Frisco ISD hit a milestone in the 1970s when enrollment of students crossed the 1,000 mark. It took three special elections to finally pass the \$1.27 million dollar bond needed to build a new high school, renovate the existing facility, and provide for other improvements to accommodate the growth. Kindergarten classes were offered for the first time in the fall of 1971.

Denton Record Chronical, August 8, 1971

The Agriculture Shop was completed first and opened in 1972 followed by the new high school in 1973. That high school was built on land behind the Maple Street Complex and remained Frisco's high school for more than 20 years before a larger facility was built and the 1973 school was renovated and renamed Benton Staley Middle School in 1996.



1972 image from the Frisco Yearbook, courtesy of Mike Cates

Can You Hear Me Now?

Today, anyone can reach in their pocket, pull out a cell phone, and place a call anywhere in the world. Just 50 years ago, this was not the case. Phones were tethered to the wall or desk by cords and making long distance calls required the assistance of an operator.

On April 6, 1970, Frisco took a leap forward when direct distance dialing and an extended service area were introduced to the community.

Direct distance dialing meant a person no longer needed to speak to an operator to place a long-distance phone call. Instructions were given to use 1+(area code) before a phone number.

The 1,176 telephone users in the Frisco exchange also received an extended service area. This permitted Frisco customers to call Prosper and the McKinney exchange (including Allen, Anna, Melissa, and Princeton) without a toll charge.

At the time, Frisco had the third highest number of phones in Collin County behind McKinney and Plano.

Frisco Enterprise, April 9, 1970, courtesy of the Cates family



The History of Frisco 1902-1976

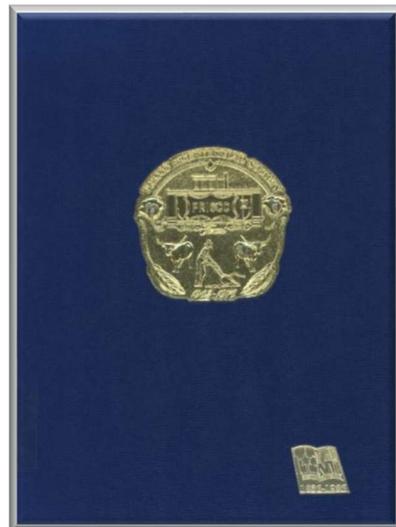
Along with the rest of America, Frisco had Bicentennial fervor. Many different celebrations and activities were planned around the theme of the Nation's 200th birthday.



Frisco's first park was constructed on five acres and named Bicentennial Park. The Frisco Railroad presented the town with Caboose #1144, which became home to the town's first museum, The Steel Wheel Museum.

Perhaps the largest undertaking by the Frisco Bicentennial Society was compiling Frisco's first history book—fondly called “The Blue Book” because of its blue cover.

Although it is out of print, the book has been digitized and is available on The Portal to Texas History. As noted in the book's preface, the purpose was to preserve the “tell-me-down” stories of early pioneers along with facts about Frisco's early days, and histories of the people who made Frisco what it was then in 1976—and created the framework for what it is today. You can find the digital version here: texashistory.unt.edu by searching for “The History of Frisco 1902-1976”.





Caboose #1144 The Steel Wheel Museum

A gift from the Frisco Railroad, Caboose #1144 became home to Frisco's first museum, called The Steel Wheel Museum. Tommy Greene of Frisco suggested the winning name.

The caboose was later moved to Main Street and used as an office for the Frisco Chamber of Commerce.

For Frisco's 100th birthday in 2002, the caboose was situated in Bicentennial Park.

Today it can be seen at the Frisco Heritage Center and Museum sitting beside Engine 19.

Seen here in Caboose #1144 is Harold Bacchus, Frisco's mayor from 1966-1978, who spent more than 40 years as the local rail agent—Frisco's last—as well as being a telegrapher for the railroad. Bacchus also served as the agent for Prosper, Celina and Gunter in addition to Frisco.

Bittersweet Goodbyes



The 1970s saw the last grocery stores in Rock Hill and Lebanon close and be demolished—now living only in the memories of old-timers. In Frisco, Thompson's Hardware on the corner of 4th and Main closed and the building was torn down to create a parking lot for the First State Bank, which then turned its original lot into a drive-thru banking lane. Today the lot is home to the town gazebo and a mural chronicling Frisco's past and present history.



Above: Gribble's Grocery on Preston Road in Lebanon
Left: Thompson's Hardware on 4th and Main in the process of being demolished. Frisco Enterprise, Aug. 3, 1972, courtesy of the Cates'.

Growing Pains

Frisco's location 23 miles from DFW International Airport (built in 1974) and 27 miles north of Dallas placed it in a unique location for expansion, which town leader's recognized and prepared for long before the major growth spurt that's happening now in the 21st century.

Several housing developments including Preston Trace Addition, Preston North Estates and Woodstream Hills were underway in the early 70s adding homes and residents to Frisco.

New sewer mains were added and a sewage treatment plant was built to keep pace with the increasing population.

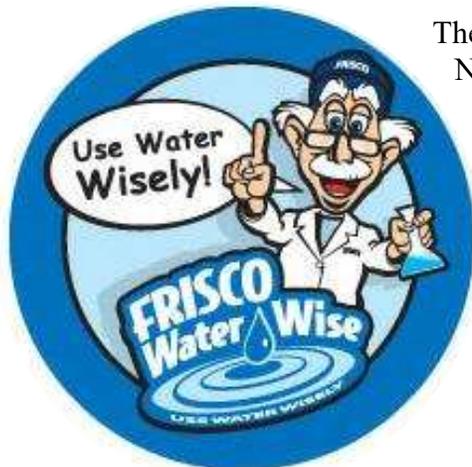
However, one of the greatest concerns was the need to secure surface water from area lakes to solve expected future water problems. The towns of Frisco, Prosper, Celina, Little Elm, Aubrey, Pilot Point and Sanger joined forces to form the Collin and Denton County Water and Sanitation District.

Meanwhile, the cities of Denton and Dallas were negotiating to control the water that would result as a part of the Aubrey Reservoir Project. Denton would control 26% of the water and Dallas would control 74%. There was no guarantee to any of the smaller towns that they would have access to water. This did not sit well with Frisco Mayor Harold Bacchus, who claimed that the Texas Water Rights Commission (TWRC) was putting the economic rights of Dallas ahead of the water rights of citizens of smaller towns by awarding exclusive rights to the Aubrey Reservoir to Denton and Dallas. Frisco and the smaller towns only wanted 10% of the water, which Denton feared would come from their 26%. Bacchus did not want to negotiate to buy water from Dallas.

Frisco was embroiled in lawsuits for most of the late 1970's over the ruling by the TWRC that awarded all the water from the Aubrey Reservoir to Denton and Dallas. During the hearings, Frisco estimates of a population reaching 85,000 by the year 2000 were scoffed at by Skip Newsome, the assistant attorney general, who claimed the estimate was "highly speculative." This sentiment was echoed by Dallas attorney, Jim Wilson, who was quoted in the same December 11, 1977 Denton Record Chronical article as saying, "What we have here is a really little city of less than 3,000 with great hopes and plans."

The Aubrey Reservoir was stalled by all of the litigation and when ground finally broke in the early 1980's the project was renamed Lake Ray Roberts in honor of Congressman Ray Roberts, a champion of water conservation who secured millions in federal funding for the project.

As it turned out, attorneys Newsome and Wilson were correct. Frisco's population estimate of 85,000 by 2000 was off—by about 6 years. Frisco crossed the 85,000 mark sometime between 2006 and 2007 and it hasn't stopped. Today the population is over 200,000 and counting. Frisco became the 13th member city of the North Texas Water District in 2001 and now draws its water from Lake Lavon.



There is a continued concern about sufficient water for Frisco and North Texas as our population grows, but residents have learned to conserve water and are encouraged through Frisco's WaterWise program to use water wisely.

Additionally, the City of Frisco offers a free sprinkler inspection for residents to make sure leaks aren't wasting water.

Residents can also subscribe to the WaterWise newsletter and get more information on water conservation at: www.friscotexas.gov/177/Water-Resources

First State Bank Robbery

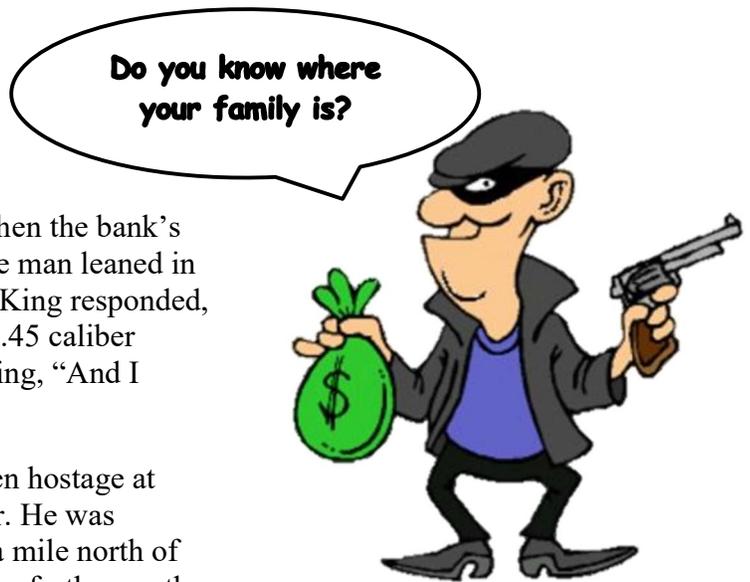
On January 22, 1971 a middle-aged man, described as “seedy looking,” entered the First State Bank on Main Street and asked to see the bank president, Jack Scott, who was at lunch. When the bank’s vice president, Tracy King, came to help him, the man leaned in and said, “Do you know where your family is?” King responded, “Yes, at home.” That’s when the bandit pulled a .45 caliber pistol and demanded to be taken to the vault adding, “And I want some big money!”

After stuffing a bag with \$26,050, King was taken hostage at gunpoint and forced into the crook’s getaway car. He was released on Highway 289 (Preston Road) about a mile north of town. The car was found abandoned about 5 miles further north, where the robber probably had another car stashed.

Less than two months later, the Prosper State Bank was robbed by two men using the same threats. This time they took bank president Ralph Boyer hostage. He was also released when the robbers switched cars outside of town.

Not long after the Prosper robbery the FBI captured 22-year-old Wallace Burkeen and 16-year-old Margaret Kent (believed to be the driver of the getaway car) in a hotel in Arkansas recovering most of the \$20,000 stolen from Prosper. Burkeen’s father, 42-year-old Harold Loyd Burkeen, surrendered to the FBI after his son and Kent were captured.

Burkeen had a criminal history and had already served time for forgery. Although he was living in Texarkana at the time of the robberies, he had spent many years as a resident of Celina and knew the area well. He was charged with both bank robberies.



From the Heritage Association of Frisco Board of Directors

The Board of Directors met via Zoom in July to discuss the continued cancellation of meetings and events while the COVID-19 situation continues. Here are a few things you should know:

- Third Sunday Open Houses are cancelled until further notice.
- We are working with the City of Frisco to come up with a plan for a safe—possibly virtual—Shawnee Trail Cowboy Day event.

If you have not paid your annual dues, or you would like to become a member, please visit our website at www.friscoheritage.org. There are two ways to complete and submit your membership application.

1. Fill out and submit an [online application](#) at www.friscoheritage.org and pay through PayPal.
2. [Download](#), print it, fill it out and mail it along with your check to: **Heritage Association of Frisco
PO Box 263
Frisco, TX 75034**

Thanks for your support!

FRISCO The First 100 Years, Frisco’s second comprehensive history book, is available for purchase at the deep discount price of \$20. You can pick one up in the welcome center of the Frisco Heritage Museum, but staff can only accept cash, or a check made payable to *Heritage Association of Frisco*.

Hollywood Comes to Frisco

Hollywood came calling in 1978 when Lorimar Productions was looking for an iconic Texas ranch to serve as the fictional Southfork Ranch for a 5-episode mini-series called DALLAS. They found the perfect location here in Frisco. The Box Ranch, home of former All-Pro wide receiver for the Detroit Lions and successful businessman Cloyce Box on 720 (Main Street) just east of Preston Road. Box was told by Bobby Folsom, Mayor of Dallas, that this would be a wholesome family show and that it would change the image of Dallas, as people only thought of the city as the place where John F. Kennedy was assassinated 15 years earlier. Box agreed to let his ranch be used for filming.

Other locations around town were used including the Maple Street school complex and the gas station (now a Valero) on the corner of Main and Preston.

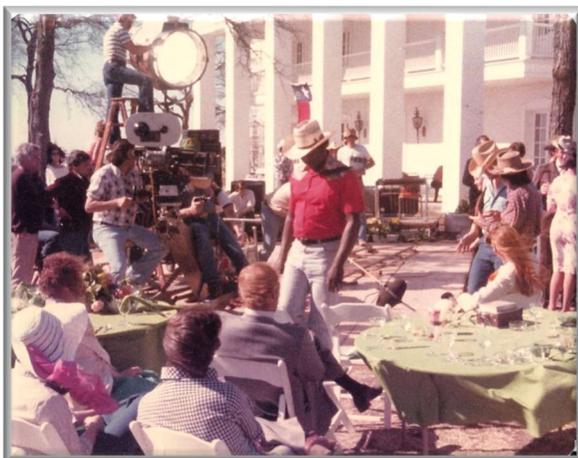
The show aired for five weeks in April and May of 1978. Some critics called it ‘trashy television’. One, Bruce Blackwell said, “DALLAS, ostensibly is about a powerful Texas oil family that is involved in some shady business practices and whose members are harboring certain sordid secrets about their past.” He also called it the most “exploitive, repugnant hour on television.” Fans, however, loved it and CBS quickly signed DALLAS up as a series.

When DALLAS was picked up as a TV series, Cloyce Box declined to let Lorimar continue to use his home because he did not like the way Texas oil men were portrayed and it interfered with the ranching business. A new ranch was found in Parker, Texas where the series was filmed for an additional 13 years. That home—although smaller and less grandiose than the Box home—became one of the most famous and iconic houses in television history. It is still a tourist attraction, a museum, and an event venue today.



Victoria Principal, Patrick Duffy and other actors on the Box Ranch set of DALLAS the mini-series.

Photos courtesy of the Box family



The cast and crew of Dallas on the front lawn of the Box home.

Photos courtesy of the Box family



A screenshot from the opening credits of the mini-series shows the Box Ranch and home. After a fire in the 1990's, only the skeleton of the home remains today on Brinkmann Ranch.

From the President's Desk

Greetings to our still quarantined Heritage Association of Frisco members and friends. It has been quite a while since we have been able to get together. Sadly, with the uptick in cases here in Texas, I think it will be a bit longer before we can be together for a meeting or host Third Sunday activities. The HAF Board has been meeting regularly on Zoom. We are in the process of setting up a virtual presentation to share with you all. The pandemic has made it necessary to rethink our plans for Shawnee Trail Cowboy Day as well. This year we will be trying to capture the day's events on video and share it on our website and Facebook pages. More details to follow about this and our virtual meeting presentation.

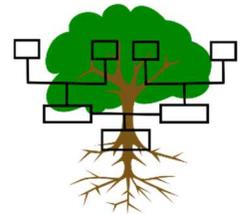


Check out our website and Facebook pages for any upcoming announcements. We will continue to share pages from Zoie's coloring book "Frisco Through the Ages" and Vicki Burns will be continuing to share suggestions and ideas to help you in doing genealogy work online. Let us know if there is anything that you would be interested in seeing or hearing about. Any suggestions for sharing our history would be greatly appreciated.

As always, I would like to encourage you all to renew your membership and help us to continue to research, preserve and share Frisco's rich heritage. Let us explore the past and imagine the future together. Please take care and be safe.

Historically yours,
Donna Schmittler, President, Heritage Association of Frisco

Researching Your Roots



This month I want to introduce you to <https://books.google.com/>
It is an online, fully searchable digital library.

Type in a search term with or without quotes and the search will come back with that word or phrase. To narrow down the number of hits you get you can use the tilde (~) character. (Shift and the button next to the Number 1 on the keyboard). I like to use quotation marks in searches, so it comes up with the exact phrase I am looking for. I also add the tilde character to narrow the results even further.

For example:

"Kittel Kittelson" returned four pages of hits. When I add ~Washington at the end it returns only one page of results. This is very helpful if you have a more common name. You can also add more than one tilde to your search.

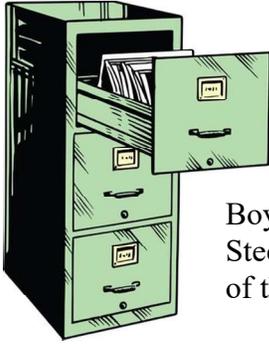
Of the search results, you will have three types.

No preview means that the word or phrase is in the book, but you will have to go to a library or a bookseller to view it.

Snippet view will show you a few pages with the word or phrase, but not all hits or the whole page. You will have to go to a library or a bookseller to view all of the results.

Full view will show the whole book, in digital form and may be able to download it to your computer.

Vickie Burns
Chairman, Genealogy Committee



BONUS: From the HAF Archives

Boy Scouts raise the flag at the dedication of Boxcar #1144 as The Steel Wheel Museum. Today the caboose is located on the grounds of the Frisco Heritage Center.



Volunteers!



The Heritage Association of Frisco invites YOU to become a volunteer. Even in this time of social distancing, we still need people to help with the collection, write the newsletter, and other “hands-on” activities. We also need our older families to share photographs from Frisco and other early towns. We can come to you to scan them. If any of this feels like something you could do, please drop us an email at secretary@friscoheritage.org .