

**The next meeting of the GP Historical  
Organization is scheduled for  
November 16, 11:30 am at 1516 W. Main Street.**

Please call Angela Giessner for reservations, 972-262-5151

## Noted Author Jim Gatewood to speak

Jim Gatewood is going to speak at the next meeting of the GPHO. Mr Gatewood is a noted author and speaker.

Dallas literary groups are referring to Mr. Gatewood as "**The Earnest Hemingway of Texas Folklore.**"

Jim is a child of the depression, born 11 days before the market crash in 1929. His father, a Chicago stockbroker, like so many others, was wiped out in that crash. Jim's mother put him in a laundry basket and placed him in the back seat of their 1929 Hudson automobile, and the family left for California, where the banks had not closed.

A rear axle on the Hudson broke in McKinney, Texas. Un-

able to pay for repairs, the auto mechanic told Mr. Gatewood of a bank in Dallas that would loan him money if he had the papers showing his car was paid for. Mr. Gatewood caught the interurban to Dallas in search of the tallest building down town, the Magnolia building. Located on the ground floor of the building was the Mercantile & Securities Bank.

A young banker by the name of Robert Thornton made the loan to Jim's father and introduced him to John Rauscher and Charlie Pierce who ran the securities department of the bank. Mr. Pierce offered Mr. Gatewood a job, and Jim and his family remained in Dallas.

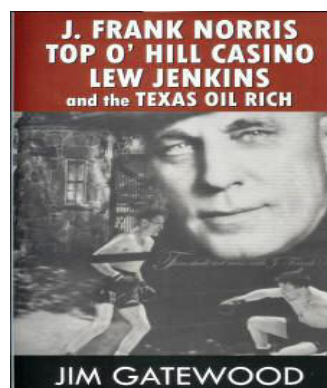
Jim Gatewood has written four books, "**Decker, a Biography of Sheriff Bill Decker of Dal-**

**las County," "The Legend of Benny Binion, Dallas Gambler & Mob Boss," "Captain Will Fritz, and the Dallas Mafia,"** and a book about "**J. Frank Norris, Top O' Hill Casino - Lew Jenkins and the Texas Oil Rich**".

Mr. Gatewood is also the Founder of the Dallas County Assassination Review Board that closed the JFK Murder Case.

His works not only chronicle the lives of three dynamic Dallas men, but, perhaps, more importantly preserves a colorful, previously unpublished segment of Dallas History.

Mr Gatewood can be reached at [www.dcarb.com](http://www.dcarb.com), (972) 278-5763 or e-mail at [jimgatewood@yahoo.com](mailto:jimgatewood@yahoo.com)



## Celebrate!

### *Celebrate the heroes*

who stood before a crowd and spoke of peace and freedom equality, out loud.

### *Celebrate the valiant*

who found the strength within to stay where they weren't welcome and force change to begin.

### *Celebrate the leaders,*

who tried but never quit and risked their lives for freedom,

for they believed in it.

### *Honor all our soldiers,*

together and alone, who stood with dignity to claim what was their right to own.

Annoymous

**"As we express our gratitude we must never forget that the highest**

**appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."**

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

## Veterans Day 2006

For the freedoms you have, for the extraordinary life you lead, thank a veteran.



## UPDATE: Historic Grand Prairie, Texas

I'm still deep into research on the history book, but recently started putting a pen to paper on the writing.

Researching the book has been interesting. When we study history in school, it's more an overview of an entire culture. With this project, I'm trying to find the slivers of everyday life that reflect the character of Grand Prairie's past and her people.

Let me share a few things that I hope will illustrate what I mean.

When the defense plant closed in 1945, a lot of sheet metal workers were left without jobs. But, with the Grand Prairie opening of Lone Star Boat Co.- America's largest manufacturer of aluminum and fiberglass boats- their skills were put to new use. It was a very industrious solution that provided the former defense workers with paychecks, and Americans with new toys on the weekends.

I've found that there are a lot of similarities in socializing among young folks,

even those born 100 years apart. Today, kids get together and play video games. Kids a century ago also had modern gadgets such as the newly introduced Brownie cameras. Kodaking was one of the many sports they enjoyed when visiting one another in the early 1900s.

There have been some amusing revelations as well, such as a note I found from the mid-1950s. The master baths, laundry rooms

and central air/heat we enjoy as standard amenities were innovative enough to warrant a note in the newspaper. New fashions in houses have meant expansion of plumbing lines. Today two and three bathrooms in each home are accepted quite matter-of-factly and central heating and air conditioning is often a must. Automatic washers must be accommodated.

That's just a



## Fred D. Knox : Aerospace Walk of Honor 2006

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, Myrle Knox's son, Fred D. Knox, was recognized in the Aerospace Walk of Honor in Lancaster, California. Started in 1990, the Aerospace Walk of Honor program seeks to recognize test pilots who have made outstanding contributions to the aerospace industry.

Fred Davy Knox served as lead pilot for the X-31 Post Stall Demonstrator Aircraft, the Ranger 2000 IPATS experimental jet trainer and the Boeing X-32 joint Strike Fighter. He was a high angle-of-attack project pilot on the F-22, completing 120 flights in the X-31 and the first flight of the X-32A.

Knox graduated from the University of Houston in 1973 with a BS Degree in Electrical Engineering. Toward the end of college, Knox's studies in engineering and his interest in airplanes came together to form his desire to become a test pilot. He completed 22 hours of graduate study in control theory in 1974 and in 1975 was commissioned in the U.S. Navy. During 14 years of active duty in the US Navy, Knox served two sea tours flying F-14s, making over 400 carrier landings.

Knox graduated from the USAF Test Pilot School Class 80A with distinction, realizing his dream of becoming a test pilot. He served as test pilot and operational director at VX-4 and as special project test pilot for the 6513<sup>th</sup> Test Squadron on several classified programs. He was also an instructor at the US Navy Test Pilot School. In 1989 Knox

joined Rockwell, serving as chief pilot on the X-31 and later as chief pilot for the Ranger 2000. From 1997 to 2001, Knox was chief test pilot on the Boeing X-32 Experimental Concept Demonstrator Aircraft, completing the first flight of the X-32A on September 18, 2000. In 2001 he joined the F-22 Combined Task Force as a Project Pilot.

The first pilot to be selected as a Boeing Technical Fellow, Knox has received the Smithsonian Air and Space Award for Current Achievement as a member of the X-A31 International Test Organization. A Fellow in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots, he has served several terms on their Board of Directors. In all he has flown over 5000 hours in various aircraft.

*It goes without saying, Ms. Knox is very proud of her son Fred.*



## Lifetime Members of GPHO

Carol Bell, Grant Bell, Brian W. Bingham, L.R. Cannon, Ouida Chapman Lewis, Lisa Chennault Brown, Helen Chennault, Thomas Chennault, Thomas B Chennault, City of Grand Prairie Marketing, H. Victor Copeland, Jerry Corley, Charles and Janice England, Olive Gallo-way, Norma Hale, Lee D. Herring, Thomas Hight, Jorja Jackson Clemson, Marie Kerr Stufflebeme, Blythe Kizziar, Duane McGuffey, Betty Phillips, Charles Powers, Bob Roberts, Susan Shuffler, Fynlon and Eugenia Simpson, Ouida Smith, Amy Sprinkles, Angela Sutton Giessner, Donald Taylor, Ruthe Thompson Jackson, Laura Thompson Potter

## The Allen Ice House

By Eric Hansen

The Allen family's Grand Prairie adventure began in 1917 when my great-great grandparents, Maston Leroy and Johnnie Allen moved to the area in 1917. The story of our family's history has been related to me by my great Aunt Mable Allen, one of ten children born to "M.L.", as he was known, and Johnnie. M.L. and Johnnie were both originally from Scottsboro, Alabama. They moved to Texas at about the turn of the century, settling in the Coryell County farming community of Turnersville. My aunt Mable Allen was born in 1908 in Turnersville. M.L.'s sister, Ada, and her husband, Walter Steely, lived on a farm at what is now the corner of Arkansas Lane and Hwy 360. Because family was nearby and the job market better, M.L. and Johnnie moved to the area, settling first at a farm on Polo Road, near Matthew Road in what is now south Grand Prairie. Coincidentally, this is just a couple hundred yards west of where I live now. At that time my Aunt Mabel attended the Florence Hill School. The family owned a car, but during wet weather they had to either ride horses to school or go in the back of a wagon. The roads in those days certainly weren't what they are now.

After living for awhile on Polo Road, the family moved to the Yarborough farm on Belt Line Rd. This was located where Crossland Blvd and Robinson Road intersect today. From there they moved to a farm next door to where Walter and Ada Steely lived on Arkansas Lane, in Tarrant County. This farm was located where the Forum 303, mall sits now and the driveway, I am told, was just east of where Hawco Drive now intersects Arkansas Lane. Their land spread all the way north of where Highway 303 is now. With such a large family, there were at least two houses on the property, one of which was lived in by my great grandfather, Calvin "Bud" Allen, Mable's older brother. Bud and his wife Trudy raised four children, including my grandfather, Mackey Bill Allen, who was born on that farm in 1927. Aunt Mable tells me that they had to attend school in Arlington, and she went to the Grace Chapel School, which I believe was on Arkansas Lane near what is now New York Ave. Aunt Mable said that she attended Arlington High School for a time, but didn't like it there so "Daddy" moved her to Grand Prairie High School. She graduated from GPHS in 1928.

During the 1920's M.L. drove a milk route for Borden, until he suffered a mild stroke and could no longer work for them. After recovering from the

stroke, M.L. and Johnnie moved to Grand Prairie proper and built the Allen Ice House, in the 100 block of North West St (now NW 2<sup>nd</sup> St) on the site of what is now the Grand Prairie Municipal Court. They lived across the street at "The Telephone House". For many years the telephone company operated out of this house, which was located where the former Lenox Hotel is now. When the telephone company moved out, the Allens rented the house and lived there from the late-1930's until the early 1950's. This house was known all over town as "The Telephone House". Interestingly, there was no phone at the house and the family used the phone at the Ice House. Next door to the Allen Ice House was The Midway Garage and across Main Street from that was a gas station owned by "Cotton" Moore.

The family lived in several other places before settling at "The Telephone House". I suppose people moved around a lot in those days. Some of the locations Aunt Mable says they lived at include a house on SW 4<sup>th</sup> street where the Texas First Credit Union is now. She said there was an empty lot between their house and one owned by the Keesler Family. M.L. built a baseball diamond there, and I am told it was popular with neighborhood kids. Mable also lived at the home of Irene Graham on Church Street for a time. Irene's house was across the street from the Waggoner house, which was next door to a house owned by the Stubbs family. One of Mable's sisters, Sylvia, married Don Small, whose family Small Street is named after. One of Don Small's sisters married former fire chief J.C. Swadley. Aunt Mable says that in about 1939 M.L. let two Plattner brothers move into a room at the house when they first came to Grand Prairie. From that point on the Plattners themselves established a rich history in Grand Prairie.

Johnnie Allen passed away in 1944 at The Telephone House. M.L. continued to live there for a few more years until failing health caused him to sell the Allen Ice House and move to a nursing home in Dallas, where he passed away in 1953. Both are buried at Southland Cemetery. My grandfather, Mackey Bill Allen, graduated from Grand Prairie High School in 1945 and currently lives near Mineral Wells.

While I cannot personally verify some of what I have written, I trust that the still-sharp mind of a very sweet 97-year old lady has led me to write this story of my family with some accuracy. My Aunt

Mable turns 98 years young on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Many of you reading this may know her, and she is the last of that generation of my family. She currently lives in an assisted living center in Arlington.



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### Preserving the History of Grand Prairie

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The Grand Prairie Historical Organization's purpose is to search out, record, collate, preserve, and pass on to the next generation, the history of Grand Prairie, Texas, and its Southwest Dallas County environs, including the appropriate marking of authentic historical sites.

The dues year of the Organization shall be from January 1 in each year through Dec. 31 of the same year. The following classes of membership apply:

**Regular Membership:** The annual dues for single members shall be fifteen dollars (\$15.00) and twenty-five (\$25.00) for couples .

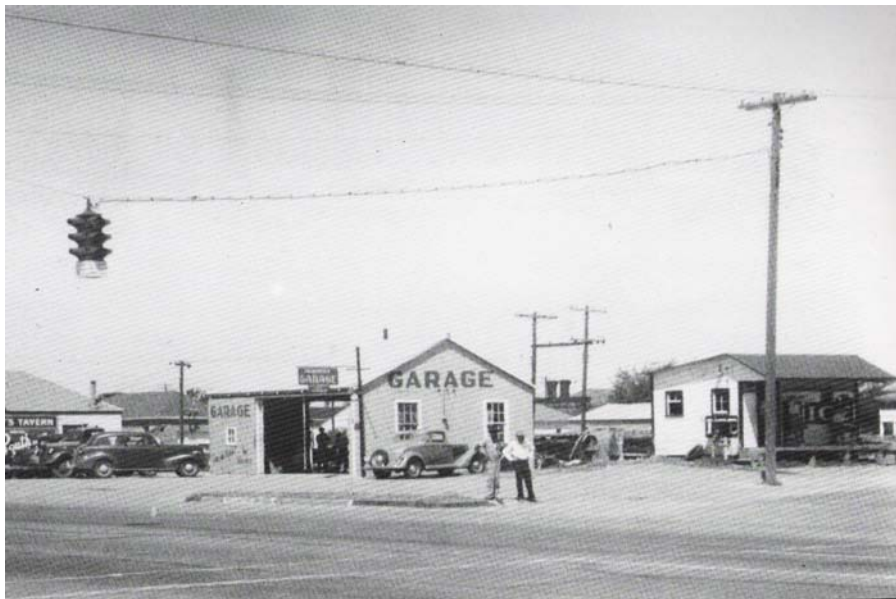
**Life Membership:** Any person 45 years or older who contributes \$200 shall be a member for life without further payment of dues.

**Gold Star Membership:** Payment of 10 years in advance, \$150 (no age limit).

**Patron Membership:** Any person who contributes five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or more to the Organization shall be a Life Member thereof and shall, in addition thereof be appropriately recognized as a Patron of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization.

**Corporate Membership:** Any small business that contributes \$250.00 shall be classified as a corporate member.

Dues should be mailed to Mrs. Giessner. Her information is listed to the left.



**This is the corner of North West Street (now NW 2nd) and Main around 1936. The Allen Ice House is the building on the far right. Currently, this is where the**

**Frank W. Robertson Municipal Court Building is located, , which would put the Ice House directly across from the old Lennox Hotel. This traffic light was one of 3 on Main at the time.**