

Dallas is proud of its culture, both then and now

BY MARY BARBERIO
CORRESPONDENT

Gone are the horse-drawn wagons laden with cotton, struggling through muddy roads deep with ruts. Gone are the days when a stray cow could be found meandering aimlessly down Main Street. The dry goods stores, hawking everything from ladies' dresses to coffee, sugar, cigars, nails and plows, are gone. Stockyards are gone.

Present-day Dallas boasts of concrete and steel and glass and lots of reflections. Its buildings are tall, flashy and ultramodern. One 72-story skyscraper is outlined with miles of green neon and, when seen at night, appears almost surreal. Another, the green-glassed arrow-shaped building designed by the famous I.M. Pei, is uniquely dramatic and eye-catching. Then there's the huge, shining, silver ball atop the 660-story Reunion Tower, with revolving restaurant, lounge and observation deck. All combine to give Dallas a spectacular and distinctive skyline and flavor.

Culture, entertainment and shopping abound in Dallas. The Uptown District has numerous antique shops, galleries and theaters. Fair Park District houses eight major museums and the Cotton Bowl Stadium, not to mention the nation's largest collection of Art Deco buildings. In the Arts District you can walk through the nation's largest centralized arts development or listen to the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. And there's the district known as Deep Ellum. In the 20s it featured jazz joints and rhythm and blues. Today it hosts an eclectic collection of art galleries and clubs where you can hear everything from rock to reggae, from country to heavy metal.

Yes, present-day Dallas is up-to-day. But Dallas hasn't lost its roots, its heritage, charm and warmth.

In the Old City Park District, you can step back in time to mid-19th century and explore an authentic prairie-style country store, blacksmith shed, church, band, cabin and schoolhouse. And its western culture is memorialized at Pioneer Plaza, where a herd of 40 larger-than-life bronze longhorn cattle is tended by three bronze cowboys on horseback. Many beautiful buildings have been restored and remain a lasting reminder — churches, theaters, government buildings, hotels. And the trolley, an authentic electric trolley, has returned to the streets of downtown Dallas.

We were delighted with and spent most of our time in, the West End Historic District.

The walk from our hotel in the southwest corner of downtown Dallas took us right past the Old Red Country Courthouse. One of the oldest (1892) buildings in Dallas, it stands stately and proud. Since it housed the visitor's center, we started our tour there. Across the street is Dealey Plaza and the old Texas School Book Depository. Of course we checked out the sixth floor's exhibit of the life, death and legacy of President John F. Kennedy. Heading east, we stopped and admired the open tomb, erected as a memorial to President Kennedy, had our pictures taken by the old pioneer log cabin and then walked on to the arched entryway of the West End District at Market and Elm.

And guess what? There the streets are still lined with brick. There the turn-of-the-century storefronts and red brick warehouses still stand. Never mind that they no longer house buggies and whips and wagons and plows. Today they are home to restaurants with patio dining and clubs and boutiques. And down the street you'll see horse-drawn carriages waiting to take you on a tour of the city. Take the tour or walk down memory lane with me and picture Dallas as it used to be, with the wagons loaded with cotton, the dry goods stores hawking all that coffee and sugar and nails. Ignore the ringing of those annoying cell phones. Instead, choose one of the tempting restaurants, sit down at one of their outdoor tables, kick back, relax and reminisce.

Talk to the locals and listen to their stories. Did you know that Clyde Barrow (of the leg-

endary Bonnie and Clyde duo) spent some time in Dallas, working at the very same warehouse that now houses the MarketPlace? We heard this from a shopkeeper. Fact or fiction? I don't know about you, but I'm going to include it in my recollection of Dallas history. We returned night after night to the Historic District to relax, eat, people-watch and to just absorb the ambience.

Mary Barberio is a Northville resident.

DALLAS FACTS

- Dallas is a major finance center and one of the top convention cities in the nation.
- Dallas has four times more restaurants per person than New York City.
- The first integrated circuit, which became the microchip, was invented by Jack Kilby in 1958 at Texas Instruments.
- The frozen margarita was invented by Dallas restaurateur Mariano Martinez in 1971.



Old and new co-exist in downtown Dallas. The arrow-shaped building, designed by I.M. Pei, seems to balance precariously to the right of the old red courthouse.

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