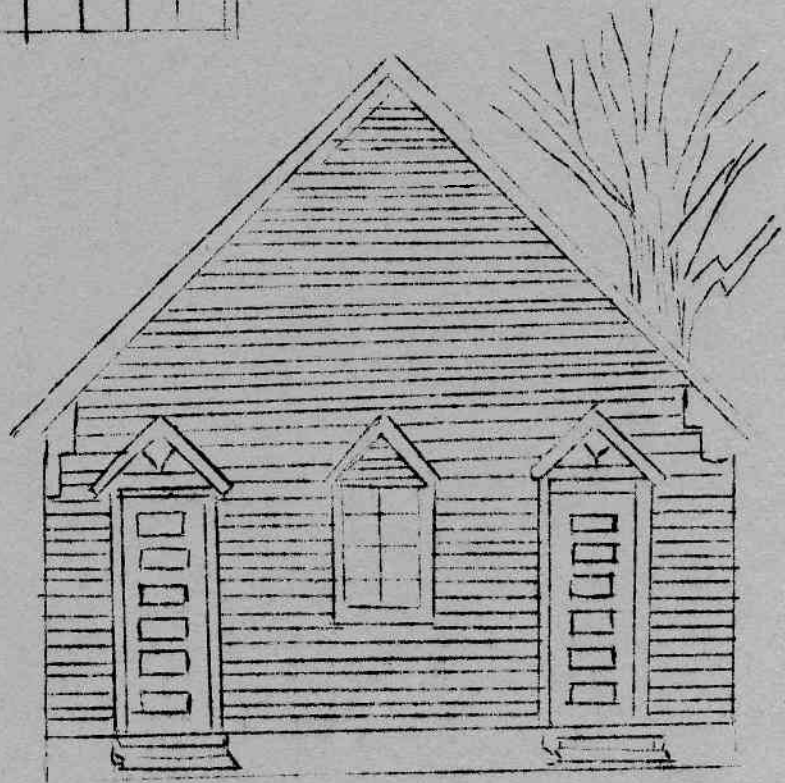
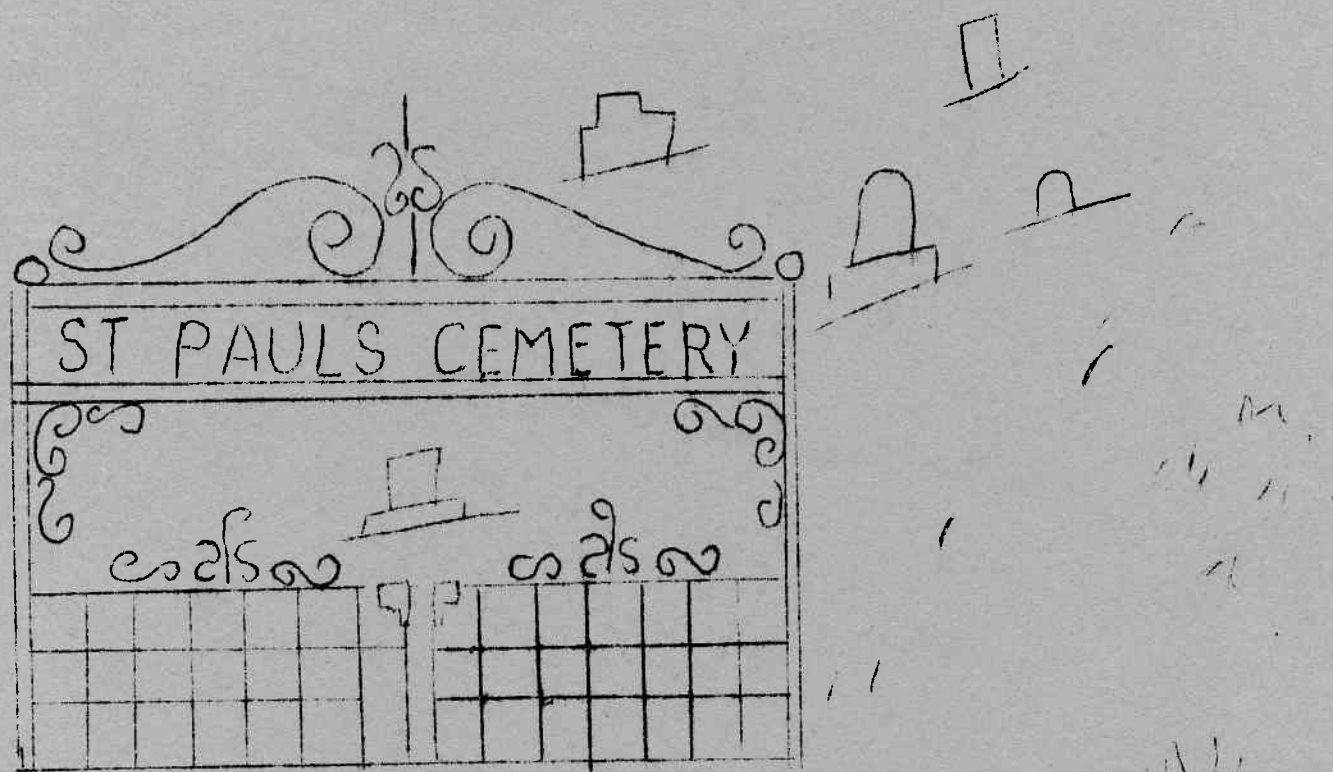


HISTORY of ST. PAUL COMMUNITY



A. Fagan

HISTORY OF ST. PAUL COMMUNITY

Bicentennial Project

1976

The St. Paul Community is located about ten miles west of the Ellis County seat, Waxahachie, on State Highway #287. It lies in a rich blackland farming district approximately half way between the towns of Midlothian and Mansfield, Texas. For many years, it has been a thriving community. A quote from the Midlothian Argus of January 13, 1916 says, "Midlothian is fortunate in having a pike road to this excellent community which gives us an advantage over all our competitors in bidding for their trade. It is an old and historic community; has a fine country church, a school-house, a cemetery, and every convenience and comfort that an enterprising country people could have." Sometime in the late 40's, the school was disbanded and the building was sold and moved into Midlothian where it was converted into an apartment house in the Negro community of that city. At one time a cotton gin was located on or near Mountain Creek in the St. Paul Community. It was built by Tom and Bill Gainer. The gin was moved to Britton in 1895.

One of the black dirt roads was known as "Greasy Row", located west, off Highway #287 between Soap Creek and Mountain Creek. Since cotton and grain were the main crops raised earlier, there were many migrant workers during the harvesting seasons. There were several houses on this road that were built just alike where the people lived. Usually, they were Mexicans or Negroes.

Some of the people who live there now still refer to the road as "Greasy Row".

"Looking for a City" will probably be one of the old gospel songs which will be dedicated to the memory of the settlers of St. Paul for the homecoming which is held on the fourth Sunday in July each year. Activities include a picnic lunch with singing and visiting all day. It is a most joyous occasion as well as sad because so many of the loved ones are buried in the cemetery that lies just across the road from the church.

W. S. Fife donated the land for the church on the condition that it bear a "Biblical" name; hence, St. Paul. This is according to the Deed Records as copied from Vol. 82, page 181, as recorded in Waxahachie. Mr. William Gardner donated the land for the school and the cemetery according to Deed Records, Vol. 27, page 226. However, the school was named Gardner School even though everyone called it the St. Paul School.

According to the minutes of a meeting of the cemetery association on February 21, 1906, the committee to lay off St. Paul Cemetery included J. W. Gainer, W. J. Gardner, and J. D. Ellis. Land for the cemetery was donated by William Gardner in 1885. He bought the land in 1870 from the State of Texas. Several persons were buried there before the land was given. Charter members of the cemetery association included J. W. Gardner, Larry Mills, J. C. Boyce, I. B. Curry, P. M. Riley, I. L. Rowdon, J. H. Sumpter and W. R. Galloway. In a trip through this well kept little cemetery, many of these names were noted on the tombstones.

Some of the earliest dates noted were those of Mrs. Pearlle Gainer, 1875; S. A. Gainer, May 22, 1811 to Dec. 23, 1879; Joe H. Lane, 1864 to 1876; W. F. Stone, Aug. 8, 1826 to Jan. 1, 1879; William Gardner, Nov. 2, 1810 to Sept. 25, 1887; Laura E. Ogwine, 1860 to 1882; a Cox infant, who was one of the first to be buried there in 1877 and others. Of course, there were some who had died earlier, but some of the graves were marked with only a rock with no inscription at all, while others were illegible.

The next recorded meeting of the cemetery association was June 14, 1912. J. H. Cox was the chairman. The officers elected were: T. P. Darby, president; John Galoway, Vice-President; W. G. Abernathy, Treasurer; and E. Wilson, Secretary. The managers were W. Harmon, J. H. Beard, and L. Galaway.

Some of the very early settlers of the community included the following: J. W. Gainer, Larry Mills, J. O. Boyce, I. B. Curry, P. M. Riley, I. L. Rowdon, J. D. Ellis, J. H. Sumpter, W. R. Galloway, T. S. Way, W. J. Tipps, W. J. Gardner, J. A. Arnold, J. C. Welch, F. Gainer, S. E. Miner, N. H. Rowdon, E. J. Welch, Elisha Massey, Prather, Miller Gainer and many others.

Lumber for the church was hauled by wagon from Midlothian. One carpenter, a Mr. McElroy from Midlothian, was hired and others were the settlers who actually built the church themselves. It was completed in July, 1894. Someone said, "They just pitched in and worked." Many of these men walked and carried their lunch and spent many days working on the church. According to the Sunday School ledger that hung on the wall for many years, the Sunday School was organized in 1878. Today, the church is leaning

THE CHURCH BUILDING BURNED TO THE GROUND - 10-21-95

and showing the effects of many years of service as a community church and a landmark in the St. Paul area. The little church holds many fond memories through the years for many of its people. The first funeral held in the church was that of Jim Mathis, who was the son of John Mathis in May, 1883.

For many years the church was on the Britton Methodist Charge along with other neighboring churches. This made it impossible to have preaching every Sunday as the pastor sometimes served three or four other churches. However, the people met each Sunday for Sunday School, and even yet, they meet the third Friday night of each month for singing, in addition to the annual homecoming each July.

Revival meetings were always held in the summer and sometimes lasted two full weeks. People would come from miles around in wagons, buggies, and on horseback every night. Many of these same people would be in attendance at the 10:00 A.M. worship service each day also. Sometimes they would have cottage prayer meetings prior to the regular services. This meant traveling more distances to the various homes. Usually, these meetings were held under a brush arbor near the church in the earlier days. There were some great evangelists and many people dedicated their lives to Christ in the old St. Paul Church. To these, especially, as well as others, it is a very sacred and hallowed place.

Charter members of the church were Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Craig, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Tipps, Mrs. Sherman Way, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Ellis, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Cox, and Mr. and Mrs. I. B. Curry.

Harold Davis, who still lives in the community, was superintendent of the St. Paul Sunday School for 25 years. His sister, Mrs. Lorene Beard of Fort Worth, was pianist for many years. She also played the old fashioned pump organ before there was a piano. Another sister, Mrs. Neva Gilstrap of Mansfield, was secretary of the Sunday School. These people, along with members of their families, and others in the community have worked very diligently through the years to maintain and preserve this historical little church building.

The community Christmas tree in all of its splendor, together with a little program and a visit from Santa, has become a tradition down through the years. Even yet, some faithful residents of the community, Rufus Hinton, Harold Davis or others, get a live large cedar tree, which is decorated for the annual Christmas party. The young folks and women decorate it. In the earlier days, the decorations were home-made of popcorn, cranberries, and paper chains, etc. It was truly a community affair then because everyone participated.

The women of the St. Paul community met in the home of Mrs. Dovie Davis on March 21, 1952, and organized the St. Paul Home demonstration Club. Mrs. Jo Ann Gray, Home Demonstration Agent, and Miss Miriam Windle were present to help organize the club. The eight charter members of the club were: Mrs. B. W. Allred, Mrs. Ethel Hughes, Mrs. Dovie Davis, Mrs. Hattie Turner, Mrs. Forrest Wilson, Mrs. Rita Goad (deceased), Mrs. Sarah Turner, (deceased), and Mrs. Iva Craig. Those joining later were Mrs. Fay Jones, Mrs. Crouch, Mrs. J. A. Brown, Mrs. Wynelle Mathis, Mrs. Letty Wilson and Mrs. Lela Evans.

Those St. Paul ladies who have served as president of the Home Demonstration Club throughout the years are as follows:

Hattie Turner: 1952 - 1953	Hattie Turner: 1966 - 1967
Dovie Davis: 1954 - 1955	Juanita McVean: 1968 - 1969
Rita Goad: 1956 - 1957	Mary Kilchenstein: 1970
Iva Craig: 1958 - 1959	Lucille Lyles: 1971 - 1972
Juanita McVean: 1960 - 1961	Juanita McVean: 1973 - 1974
Mary Kilchenstein: 1962 - 1963	Dovie Davis: 1975 - 1976
Wynelle Mathis: 1964 - 1965	

The club has had eight agents as follows:

Jo Ann Gray: 1952	Juanita K. Cauthen: 1962
Gloria Clark: 1953	Claudia McDonald: 1964
Quida Portman: 1959	Judy Edwards: 1965 - 1973
Carolyn King: 1961	Ernestine Edmundson: 1974 to present

Throughout the years, the St. Paul Club has furnished two council chairmen: Dovie Davis and Juanita McVean. It has sponsored the March of Dimes cancer drive, and the cancer program in which the club members made over 1,000 bandages. Several members attended a first aid course in Midlothian and were awarded certificates.

During the drought years, Dr. Martin Emmert (deceased) of Texas Christian University of Fort Worth, brought a program on ways and means of saving out soil and conserving water. Dr. Marguerite Potter of the History Department, T.C.U., also has given several lectures and slide presentations of her travels abroad. Several foreign students have given programs of their

life and customs as follows: Mrs. Ira Kimbrough, a native of Paris, France; Mrs. Zena Eldridge, a native of Australia and member of the St. Paul community; one foreign exchange student from Switzerland and one from Australia.

In 1960, the club sponsored a program of having the water wells in the community tested. For many years the club has sponsored a patient at the State School in Abilene as well as the State School in Denton. This was done by contributing monthly for personal use for a patient who would not otherwise have this privilege. This has been a very rewarding project for the group.

Other interesting and informative programs throughout the years have been flower arrangement, furniture refinishing, gift wrapping, drapery making, cooking, canning, freezing of foods, clothing, pattern alterations, crafts of all kinds, programs on drug abuse and marijuana, child abuse, driver education, etc.

The St. Paul Club has made several tours including the Fort Worth Garden Club, Botanic and Japanese Gardens of Fort Worth, Flowercade, Chandor Gardens of Weatherford, Fort Worth Museums, Trade Market of Dallas, Flea Market of Canton, etc.

One of the highlights of 1976 included honoring the St. Paul Club's oldest living member, Mrs. Lizzie Hendrixson, age 97. at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Janice Springer in Waxahachie.

In this Bicentennial year, the St. Paul Home Demonstration Club has a total of 16 members, double its original membership, and is still growing. For 24 years, it has been serving the ladies of the community giving them an opportunity to learn many new and

and improved skills in the art of homemaking. But even as important, it has given its members a way of expressing their love, concern, and friendship within the St. Paul Community.

Written and edited by the Bicentennial Committee

St. Paul Home Demonstration Club

Juanita McVean, Chairman

Mary Kilchenstein

Betty Mackie

St. Paul Cemetery ceremony Saturday

St. Paul Cemetery, an early pioneer burial ground 5.3 miles south off US 287 near Mansfield, will be the site of an Historical Marker Dedication ceremony this Saturday, Nov. 12 at 2 p.m.

The marker is a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brown-ing. Research for the marker application was prepared by Dorothy Quinn of the Mansfield Historical Society.

St. Paul Cemetery is located in Ellis County and was deeded to the Mountain Creek School Community in 1881 by William Gardner who owned 320 acres of farmland in the community.

He specified six tenths of one acre to be used for a school building site, and one and one half acres to be used as a graveyard for the benefit of the community.

The school, officially called the Gardner School existed through the school year 1940-41. When the school was absorbed by the Midlothian Independent School District, the Gardner school building was moved to Midlothian and the land given for the school was deeded to the St. Paul Cemetery Association by the Ellis County School Board in 1949.

Earliest burial records date back to February, 1906. There are markers for 378 graves as of April, 1981. Many grave markers in the oldest (west) part have been lost. The earliest legible marker is that of Mrs. Pearl Gainer (1854-1875). It is therefore assumed that the space was designed as a cemetery informally before Mr. Gardner filed his deed in 1881.

Many burials took place in 1918, often more than one in a family within a few days time, giving evidence of the influenza epidemic. Graves indicate service in the Armed Forces in World War I, World War II, and Korea. One known Civil War veteran, John Francis Mathis (1837-1925) is buried there. A special marker is being

obtained to designate his service.

St. Paul Church, closely associated with the cemetery, was a Methodist congregation which constructed a church on land deeded by W.S. Fife and wife L.M. Fife out of a tract adjacent to the school and graveyard plats. The property was deeded to the Mansfield Methodist

church trustees for church use, and stipulated that failure to build a church on the site would cause the property to revert to the donors or their heirs. The church was constructed and first used in 1883. The deed was filed in 1984.

The church building still stands near the cemetery and keeps its original design,

except for the removal of the steeple in the late 1920's for safety reasons. St. Paul was part of a Methodist Circuit and services continued there until the early 1950's. Singing services are still held there monthly. Registers for this church, beginning in about 1900, are in the keeping of the First United Methodist Church of Mansfield.



Dedication
Texas State Historical Marker
for
St. Paul Cemetery

Saturday, November 12, 1983
2:00 p.m.

ST. PAUL CEMETERY

In 1881, William Gardner deeded this site to the Mountain Creek School Community. This tract, which contained graves dating from 1875, remained in use as a public cemetery, and adjoining land was set aside for a school. After W.S. Fife and his wife, L.M., gave adjacent land for a church in 1894, the property became known as St. Paul Church and Cemetery. Burials here include those of pioneer area settlers and several victims of the 1918 influenza epidemic. The school closed in the 1940s, and the land was later conveyed to the cemetery association.

(1983)

This marker is a gift from
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Browning

P R O G R A M

MASTER OF CEREMONIES	Doyle J. Carlton, Trustee, St. Paul Cemetery
INVOCATION	Rev. Charles Walton, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Midlothian
HISTORY OF ST. PAUL CEMETERY	Glenn M. Harmon
DEDICATION	Mrs. L.T. Felty, Chairman, Ellis County Historical Commission
UNVEILING	Mr. and Mrs. Robert Browning
BENEDICTION	Rev. Walton

A business meeting will follow the dedication.

ST. PAUL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
GENERAL INFORMATION

St. Paul Cemetery Association is much in debt to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Browning and Dorothy Harmon Quinn for their work in obtaining approval of St. Paul Cemetery as a Historical Site in the State of Texas. Mrs. Quinn, as a member of the Mansfield Historical Society, did a great deal of research into the history of St. Paul and wrote a paper summarizing this information which was instrumental in obtaining recognition of the cemetery by the Texas Historical Commission in Austin. Mr. and Mrs. Browning purchased and donated the marker that has been placed near the gate of the cemetery.

At the present time, legal action is being taken to make St. Paul Cemetery Association into a non-profit corporation in the State of Texas and to be recognized as such by the Internal Revenue Service. When the many forms have been filled out and filed with the proper governmental authorities, St. Paul will have an I.D. Number for tax purposes to be used by persons who donate money to the Association.

At the present time there are two Trustees, Doyle Carlton and Harold C. Davis, who are on the Board of Directors of the new non-profit corporation being formed. Margie Easterwood Jones is also on the Board of the new corporation and her husband, Roy N. Jones, a Certified Public Accountant in the State of Texas, will act as advisor regarding any tax matters, at no cost to the association.

There is a need for other persons to serve on the Board of Directors of the corporation and to hold various offices in the Association. If you are interested in an active role in the future operations of St. Paul Cemetery Association, please contact any of the present Directors.