

Preserving Plano's past

HOW FITTING that **Janice Cline's** love for Plano began with a wedding proposal. She and her husband bought their wedding rings at the old Weatherford Jewelers in downtown Plano and eloped in 1973 at the old Collin County Courthouse. They spent their honeymoon iced in on Parker Road in a neat A-frame redwood house that they rented on the creek across from what is now Collin College's Spring Creek Campus. They bought their first Christmas tree at the Wall-Robbins house on Ave. K in downtown Plano.

After decades of building her life in and around Plano, Cline was inspired to create *Historic Downtown Plano* by Arcadia Publishing. The book is a collection of photographs depicting the earliest beginnings of Plano from the emergence of a farming community to a bustling town.

"It wasn't until the introduction of the DART rail in the early 2000s that downtown Plano began its rebirth," said Cline. "Plano is now a real urban village with upscale shops and wonderful restaurants, activities in Haggard Park, museums, theaters, and it is a pedestrian-friendly town again."

Long before DART, Cline attributes Plano's economic vitality in the 1800s to the railroad, which shipped cotton. It wasn't until the early 1900s, though, that Plano made a name for itself with the opening of the Interurban Railway. The Interurban carried passengers north to Denison and south through Dallas to Waco. When automobiles became the choice of transportation, the Interurban shut down in 1948; Central Expressway opened 30 years later.

Fortunately in 1979, before Plano's boom years, the city developed the Historic Landmark Committee to preserve some of its historical assets. The '80s and '90s have been known as the boom decades because Ross Perot brought EDS to Plano, and Frito-Lay and JCPenney planted their corporate campuses here. Said Cline, "Many newcomers and visitors are unaware of the 100-year-old buildings that are still downtown. My goal with this book is to capture the casual reader with a pictorial history of what Plano used to look like so they can appreciate its journey through time and see how it has become a revitalized urban transit village."

Cline was on the Plano Heritage Commission for four years, serving as vice chairman in 2008–2009, and in January was appointed to the Collin County Historical Commission (CCHC). She is the quadrant captain for surveying historical assets in the southwest quarter of the

county. "We are the only county in the state that will have all of our assets on an interactive county map, where anyone can [go online,] click on a site, learn about its history, and see photos," she said.

Younger generations may take for granted how easy it is to go online and—in a matter of seconds—delve into the history of a person, place or event. But many sites get their data from books like *Plano, Texas: The Early Years* by the Friends of the Plano Public Library, which contains many of the Francis Wells collection of images used in Cline's *Historic Downtown Plano*. Cline has spent years photographing Plano and more recently, poring

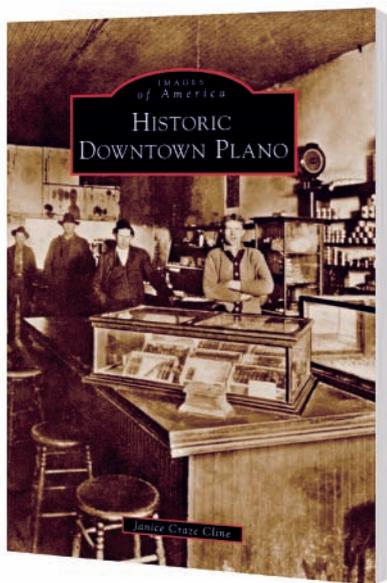
through archival photos at the library and at Fairview Farms, and from other private collections. Along the way, she has documented stories from Peggy Mitchell (owner of the Wetsel House and Mitchell houses on 16th Street), Clint and Rodney Haggard, descendants of the W.O. Haggard family, Randy Brodhed, Rick Fambro, and other merchants and families from Plano.

Stayin' alive

How do we get younger generations to appreciate Plano's history? Of course, Cline said that nothing would delight her more than to see her book become part of PISD's curriculum, but beyond school

programs, she proffered, "We bring history alive at festivals. As a matter of fact, we are bringing back the Blackland Prairie Festival—a grand party celebrating Plano's heritage, with costumes and demonstrations by blacksmiths, candle-makers, quilters, cowboys, and women suffragettes—everything history!"

To gear up for the festival, a special event will take place in Haggard Park on Sunday, October 24 called **Clint Haggard's Heritage Afternoon in the Park**. The festival will be built around Clint Haggard's ancestors, the namesake of Haggard Park, who were founding members of the First Christian Church of Plano (see page 36). Said Cline, "The park is 90 years old this year and the church is 150 years old, so there's a lot to celebrate!"—including the release of *Historic Downtown Plano* this fall.



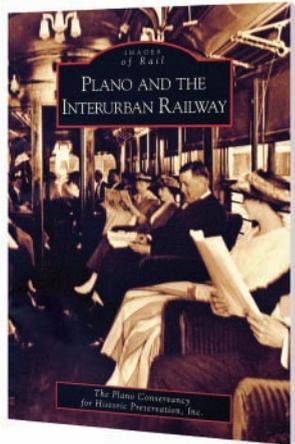
More Plano history hits the bookstands

Before the popularity of color film, photographs, and television, the Interurban Railway brought a touch of color to Plano's rural life. Somewhere in the clickity-clack sway of railcars and the ruffle of newspapers that passengers so devoutly read, weaved a thread of quiet anxiety. Sitting inches apart among a slew of strangers was one thing, but also the rail was a means to explore the big city...and it could reach up to 60 mph! Conductors who orchestrated this symphony of steel were held in high esteem; boys looked up to them as heroes.

Plano and The Interurban Railway is a cumulation of photographs that portray this colorful story. Part of that story is how, in 1914, the rail became a mixed-use mail carrier; the back of cars were refitted with bins, sorting tables, and mail slots.

The Interurban Railway ran for 40 years until December 31, 1948, just months after two railcars collided about 100 miles south of White Rock Creek. The book calls the incident "the final blow" in an era when revenues for the Texas Electric Railway were already falling because of automobiles and tax-supported highways.

Twenty years ago, the Plano station was restored and transformed into a museum that offers tours of Car 360. The Plano Conservancy for Historic Preservation, Inc. and the City of Plano manage the facility, which is located at 901 E. 15th St. in Plano. Copies of *Plano and the Interurban Railway* are available for purchase. For more information, call 972.941.2117.



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What is a fair division of the property and debts when a couple get divorced?

We are frequently asked what division of the property and debts is fair in a divorce. That is a difficult question to answer because what is fair to one person may not seem fair to someone else. Many people think each spouse automatically gets 50% of the assets and liabilities. That is not always true. In divorce, a judge can divide the assets and debts, in any manner deemed "just and right." In deciding what is "just and right" in a particular case, the judge can look at numerous factors, such as the difference in earning capacity, fault in the break-up of the marriage, and who will have primary custody of the children, among other things and decide that one party should have more than 50% of the parties' estate, depending on these factors.

If you are considering a divorce, we encourage you to consult an attorney who is experienced in family law matters. A good attorney will help guide you through the divorce so you will be in the best possible position to achieve your desired outcome. If you have other questions, visit our website at www.easleyandmarquis.com to find the answer to many of your questions and learn how we can help you through the process.

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Many engaging photographs and illustrations of the olden days in Collin County appear in Randy Farmer's book *From Blackland Prairie to Blacktop*. Photo/North Texas History Center

The North Texas History Center (NTHC) presents *From Blackland Prairie to Blacktop: A History of Collin County*, a coffee-table book written by **Randy Farmer** and published by the Historical Publishing Network. The book highlights more than 100 period photographs, maps and paintings—many of which have never been seen in print.

"Beyond the fertile soil that gave rise to agriculture, other

industries from cattle ranching to telecom have enriched the area's people and help explain the explosive growth of recent years," said Sarah Hatcher, representing the NTHC. "Farmer's book explores the economic forces that have propelled Collin County to its position as one of the most prosperous in the United States."

For more information, call the NTHC at 972.542.9457 or e-mail Sarah Hatcher at sarah@northtexashistorycenter.org. — **BRIT MOTT**