



Arlington Historical Society

NEWSLETTER
AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2020

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Growing Up in Arlington in the
1940s and 1950s
by long-time resident Fred Cook
(Part 2 of 2)

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This is the second part of an article that started in the June / July newsletter.

The Year of the Colt

In the 1951 season, our starting lineup was Leon Duffy and I at the ends, Larry Hufford and Grover Cribbs at tackle, Bill Walker and Big Jim Harris at the guards, and Pet Murray at center. Larry DaVault and Bob Kirby were at the halfbacks, and Rusty Gunn was at fullback. Ray Glasgow was the quarterback, as he had been for the last two years. The newcomers to that starting group were Duffey, Walker, Kirby, and Harris. Harold Hill and Randal Redmond platooned for Murray and Duffey on defense and had all been on the previous 1950 squad and were more than capable of filling in for our loss of personnel through graduation. The rest of us had been pretty well tested the previous two years, and we set our sights on winning each ballgame, one at a time.

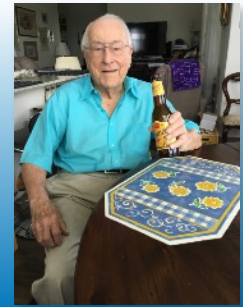
Well, we continued to win each Friday night and everything went along pretty
(continued on p. 4)

From the Editor
Denise Youngblood

In addition to the second part of Fred Cook's "Growing Up in Arlington," this issue features **Doland Maner** in our "AHS Member Spotlight" series, starting on p. 2. Doland has contributed to the AHS and to Arlington in many ways over his nearly 90 years in the city. I'd also like to draw your attention to **Jim Cooper's** response to the first part of Fred Cook's reminiscences. I hope Jim's letter will encourage more sharing of memories; letters to the editor may be sent to me at denise.youngblood@uvm.edu.

Regrettably, the resurgence of coronavirus has forced us to suspend the launch of the Texas Writers Book Club indefinitely. **There will be no meeting on September 15 or any other date this year.** We'll assess the situation again in 2021. This is especially disappointing given how much time **O.K. Carter** spent organizing and promoting this event; he deserves our thanks for his efforts.

AHS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT Doland Maner



When did your family come to Texas?

The day I came to Texas was one of the top three events of my life, a real blessing, the greatest blessing. My family—my parents, my sister, and I—moved from Decatur, Alabama and arrived in Arlington on Easter Sunday morning, 1931. I was eight years old and my sister was about five. (Our little brother was born in 1932.) My father was an experienced ironworker; his boss in Alabama had landed a position as superintendent at the Southern Ornamental Ironworks (later renamed the Southern Industrial Steel Company) and was allowed to bring five of his best men (and their families) with him to Arlington. At first there was plenty of work at the company, but as the Depression got worse, my father was cut back to two days a week.

What was your childhood like? You are truly a child of the Great Depression.

Everyone was poor, but somehow we made ends meet. We kept chickens and a cow and also had a garden in the back yard. When I was a little older, I mowed lawns to help out and later had a paper route, delivering the *Star-Telegram*. My friend Junior Sibley and I also “collected” (a nice way to say we stole) stray Coke bottles for the 5 cent deposits; the drug store owner would pay us 2 cents for each bottle *in candy*; now I know what a smart businessman he was, since he got 5 cents for the bottle, and the candy only cost him a penny!



My mother was sickly, so Beulah Gibbons, a black lady, came to live with us to help out; she cooked and took care of us kids. We loved her. Beulah and my mother could take food left over from dinner and make a good meal for the next time. Arlington was divided pretty well by the railroad into Northside and Southside neighborhoods. Nobody had much during the Depression, but the folks on the Southside had a little more. We lived on the Northside, which was known as the poor part of town. The further north you went the tougher it got. We lived close to the last street.

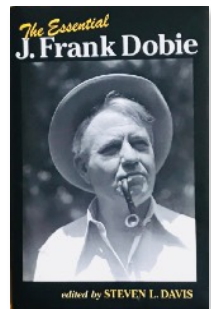
There were three schools in Arlington then. Our Northside elementary school went through the fifth grade, then we transferred to the Southside school for some reason, but that year the Southside school burned down. The children were sent to three different temporary schools for a year; I went to school at the Berachah Home on South Cooper, a home for “wayward girls.” Then we went to Arlington High School. My sister and I walked several miles every day, through heat, rain, and snow to school because there weren’t any buses, except for the bus that picked up the kids living at the Eastern Star Home and the farm kids from Grace Chapel. Our teachers were really dedicated and would come to our house if we were sick; most of them were unmarried because they’d lose their contract if they got married. They really wanted you to learn.

One of my best friends was Thomas Champion; he just passed away about a month ago
(continued on p. 6)

BOOK REVIEWS ON TEXAS HISTORY

by Denise Youngblood

Steven L. Davis, ed., *The Essential J. Frank Dobie* (Texas A&M University Press, 2019), 305 pp.



Sixty years ago, the folklorist, nature writer, and frontier historian J. Frank Dobie was Texas's most famous man of letters; a few days before Dobie's death in 1964, Texas's most famous politician, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, honored him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Since then, Dobie's reputation as a writer and historian has suffered a steep decline, mainly due to the posthumous campaign against him led by novelist Larry McMurtry and other writers and literary critics trying to reclaim the Texas narrative for themselves. The new generation of Texas historians didn't think much of Dobie's work either (he didn't cite sources or otherwise document his work according to professional standards).

Stephen L. Davis, the literary curator of the Witliff Collections at Texas State University in San Marcos and author of the biography *J. Frank Dobie: A Liberated Mind* (2009), has worked for the past decade to resurrect Dobie and restore him to the ranks of great Texas writers. This collection offers a rich and varied sampling of Dobie's prodigious output; every reader who loves old Texas tales and the flora and fauna of the southwestern part of the state is sure to find much of interest here. Dobie's love for Texas, his gift for description, and his droll humor are obvious on nearly every page.

The book reminds us also of Dobie's importance as an oral historian. Born on a ranch in Live Oak County, Texas in 1888, Dobie grew up hearing the tales of ranchers and cowboys, and by the 1910s he was collecting the stories of men (and a few women) whose lives had begun in the Texas Republic. But he chafed at the strictures of academic history and never earned a PhD, which limited his career prospects at the University of Texas at Austin, where he taught on and off for many years. By the 1920s, he was crisscrossing the state, recording his astute observations on just about everything in Texas life that he loved and felt was endangered by "progress." This is not to say that Dobie was forever mired in a Texas that was quickly vanishing; he was not. For example, Dobie was a staunch advocate for civil rights for all Texans at least from the 1910s on. The six excerpts from Dobie's political writings in the section titled "Texas Needs Brains" makes it easy to understand why Dobie was fired from UT-Austin in 1947. He was nothing if not forthright in expressing his views, even at a period when it was becoming increasingly dangerous to do so.

There is one aspect of this book that dismays me quite a lot. Not only are the articles severely abridged, they are recombined, with sentences and paragraphs removed from several articles and stitched together to create a "seamless" new one. (This is especially the case in the section "Texas Needs Brains," which makes Dobie sound more radical than he actually was.) Editor Davis also admits that on occasion he has "improved" Dobie's
(continued on p.9)

(Growing Up, from p. 1)

good with our closest call at Weatherford with the Weatherford Kangaroos who we beat in a hard-fought football game 14 to 0. Weatherford was in 3A that year and had a good ball team. The Terrell Tigers rode into town on the train with a long memory from the year before and blood in their eyes. You talk about learning humility; we got a big dose of humility that night. We were soundly defeated by the Tigers in front of our fans on our own home field. That hurt.

After that loss we felt terrible all weekend. We had been soundly beaten by a team that we had beat the year before. I guess what goes around, comes around sooner or later. Monday afternoon following that loss Coach Workman told us something that has stayed with me all my life whenever I hit a rough spot as we all do. He said, "Everybody gets knocked down, the trick is getting up." Well, that pretty well put the Terrell game behind us, and the rest, as they say, "is history." We went on to win the district and roared into the playoffs beating Olney in bi-district. We then defeated the Winters Blizzards in the regional game on their home field. The next game was the quarter finals against Pleasant Grove at Dal-Hi Stadium in Dallas. We won that ball game pretty handily and got ready for what was to be our toughest test so far in the playoffs. We were to play the Anson Tigers in the state semi-finals at Amon Carter Stadium in Fort Worth. We won and were going to the "Big Show," the Class 2A State Championship game against the LaVega Pirates.

We had lived the dream and now we had to make it come true on a cloudy, windy afternoon in Waco, Texas. Well, you all know what happened that afternoon in Floyd Casey Stadium on the campus of Baylor University. It was Gunn over left tackle into the end zone with Walker, Hufford, and Duffey clearing the

way. Gunn kicked the extra point and that was it. Gunn's two-yard touchdown run was the biggest and most magnificent run in the annals of Colt football. The Arlington Colts became the Class 2A State Champions.

I guess that I should also mention that we played a pretty good defensive ball game that day. I remember thinking right after we scored in the second quarter, "That's the ball game." There was no way we were going to let anyone cross our goal line on this day. We shut out one of the State's highest scoring teams that year 7 to 0.

A lot has been said about that ball team over the years, but the one thing that has been overlooked was what made that team what it was, and that is LOVE. We loved the game, we loved Friday nights, we loved to win, we loved each other as only teammates can, and above all we had an undying love for Coach Mayfield Workman just as he had for us. There is not a one of us who wouldn't try to run through a brick wall for him to this day, and I suspect some of us would make it. We were mainly a group of over achievers that he had made us to believe in ourselves, just as he believed in us. He molded us into a team that had our eye on the prize and were not going to be denied that day in Waco.

Life Goes On

It was a bittersweet victory in some ways as I experienced a sad moment after returning to school following the Christmas Holidays that year when I realized that it was all over. No more camaraderie with your teammates, no more Friday night lights, and the fact that we would all soon be going our separate ways, but it all worked out in the end. I entered Arlington State College and played ball there. Others went to different schools and went on with living just as I did. But that

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(Growing Up, from p. 4)

group remains joined with a common thread that bonds us together now just as it did then when we became a Band of Brothers who lived the dream and made that dream come true.

Hopefully the Colts will soon win another state championship and I hope I'm still around to see it, but there is one thing they can never take away from that 1951 team: We got there first!

On November 30, 1955, I again became one of the luckiest people on the face of the earth when I married one of the Roebuck sisters, Sandra. And again, I've been lucky over the years in that she hasn't killed me—yet. I've managed to survive so far, but all in all the years have been good to us. We have two

children, Sam and Jennifer, who both live here, and three grandchildren, Clint and Allison, who are twins, and Luci, who is a UT grad and is now working on her Masters Degree in San Marcos.

It has been a good life and thankfully most of it has been spent in this town. Thomas Wolfe once wrote a novel which he called "You Can't go Home Again," but in the memory of my mind when my thoughts drift back to the sidewalk Coke box at Terry Brothers Drug Store, the ten cent hamburgers at Rockyfellers, the old mineral well that stood at the intersection of Main and Center, playing softball, and the swimming pool at Meadowbrook Park, I am home again, at least for a while, until I sadly realize Arlington will never be that way again. I guess that's the price of progress.

This Month in Texas History

August

On August 27, 1908, Lyndon Baines Johnson, who would become the 36th President of the United States, was born on a farm near Stonewall, Texas to Samuel Ealy Johnson, Jr. and Rebekah Baines. Both his parents hailed from prominent Texas families: Johnson City (where LBJ went to high school) is named for James Polk Johnson, a cousin on his father's side, and his mother's grandfather was the well-known Baptist minister George Washington Baines, who also served as an early president of Baylor University. In 1931, a year after his graduation from Southwest Texas State Teachers College (now Texas State University), LBJ began his extraordinary political career as a legislative secretary to Congressman Richard M. Kleburg, who had just won election to represent Texas's 14th district.

September

On September 8-9, 1900, the Great Storm of 1900, a Category 4 hurricane now known as the Great Galveston Hurricane, demolished the city of Galveston, Texas with winds estimated at 140 mph. The loss of life in Galveston and its environs was at least 6,000 people and possibly as many as 12,000, although the official figure at the time was 8,000. (Property damage was well over \$100 billion in today's dollars.) The Great Galveston Hurricane still ranks as the deadliest natural disaster in US history and the third deadliest Atlantic hurricane in recorded history. Meteorology was in its infancy, and the US Weather Service wrongly predicted the storm would hit Florida's Atlantic coast and stall there. Most deaths resulted from drowning, although some victims were crushed in collapsing buildings or hit by debris.

(Member Spotlight, from p. 2)

[this interview was recorded June 20, 2020]. Thomas had an uncanny memory, remembered all the teachers, all the songs, remembered everything. We loved baseball and were always skipping off to play it, but Thomas's mother was afraid he'd hurt his fingers playing ball (he was a talented piano player). We went to the movies most Saturdays for the kiddie matinee; I'd try to save money for that. Our favorites were the serials and especially the cowboy movies. By high school I was also interested in football and became the manager of the football team. That means I was the water boy and washed the uniforms. I earned a letter jacket for that.

What happened after high school? How did World War II affect you?

I graduated from high school in 1940. I didn't have money for college but not many people went to college then. I became an apprentice at the iron works; it was a four-year apprenticeship, at the minimum wage of 30 cents an hour. I was learning how to do everything. When I heard about the bombing at Pearl Harbor, I figured I'd be called up soon, so I joined the Navy at the beginning of 1942. (Around this time my family moved back to Alabama, but I wanted to stay in Texas.)

I served in the Navy for four years. I was first stationed on the Atlantic coast at Norfolk, Virginia. We were hunting German submarines, U-boats. We flew low over the water in a twin-engine Consolidated PBY Catalina, a kind of hovercraft with a pilot and co-pilot, armed with 50 caliber machine guns; the wings were wide and long. (Some of these PBYs are still flying). We were looking for the underwater shadows of the U-boats. If they saw us, they'd dive deeper. We couldn't do anything about it, but we'd report a sighting back to the Navy, and then they'd sink depth charges. It was exciting.

Later I was stationed on the Pacific coast. Before heading west, six of us were sent to Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; getting there was the closest I came to getting killed. We flew in too low and took off the roof vents of a warehouse!—but managed to land okay. We worked for a few months at a factory with about 2,500 girls; that was hard duty, but somebody had to do it! Next I was transferred to California, to Camp Shoemaker, and loaned to the Seabees as a blaster in a naval construction battalion. I loved that job and working with the older guys. We built an engine overhaul plant there. The Seabees were following the Marines, and I wanted to go with them, but the Navy wouldn't let me.

After the war, I returned to Arlington to finish my apprenticeship; now I was making 45 cents an hour! After my apprenticeship, I worked running the blue machine, the lowest job in the engineering department and then became a draftsman, then on to being chief draftsman for several years. Thanks to the GI Bill, I was able to go to school for two years at North Texas Agricultural College (then a branch of A&M, now UTA). We had the Corps and the bonfire and everything, just like A&M, but as a veteran, I didn't have to be in the Corps. I had planned to finish at College Station but got married instead. I met my wife Dorothy on a blind date; my friend introduced me to this little country girl from Celina. I joked to my buddy before meeting her that she might be a "dog," but she was a real "doll" instead. We got married in 1947 and had two sons.

As Arlington grew, my company did too, and we supplied steel for heavy work like bridges and highways and power plants. I kept steadily moving up in the company, to assistant vice president, then vice president, then president and finally, chairman of the board and president at the same time. Dorothy and I built a house out at Mill Creek, then the most fashionable part of Arlington.

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(Member Spotlight, from p. 6)

In the 1950s, as Arlington rapidly modernized, you became involved in public service. How did that come about?

The true turning point for Arlington came when Tom Vandergriff became mayor in 1951, and General Motors agreed to build a new plant in Arlington [which opened in 1954]. This had been in the works for several years, and the Vandergriffs (who had secured the land for the plant) were able to enlist Amon Carter, who published the paper, to their cause. Up to that time, the old families controlled the city. Tom Vandergriff had gone to school at the University of Southern California and came back with new ideas for economic growth and ways to put Arlington on the map. He was only 23 when he became president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1949 and only 25 when he became mayor.

Arlington's Sister City project with Bad Königshofen, Germany began around this time as well. In 1952, I helped load the trains for the first shipments of supplies Arlington donated to Bad Königshofen to help East German refugees streaming into West Germany as the border began closing. It just seemed like the right thing to do. I knew most of the people working on it; Jim Wright helped load the first train too [this was before his election to Congress]. I never went to Bad Königshofen; one year I was ready to go, but something came up. I often met with the German visitors they sent here every other year, like the town's mayor. One year, after the official visit ended, to my surprise the mayor of Bad Königshofen told me that he and his wife had rented a motor home to drive to Beaumont, because they wanted to see Spindletop! I believe the Arlington German-American Society still meets.

Why did you decide to run for City Council?

I knew a lot of councilmen. In 1967, a seat opened up on the City Council, and a guy was running who was against everything. I decided to run because I wanted to support Tom Vandergriff's policies to kind of bring Arlington out of the dark ages. (Once the Chamber of Commerce brought an outside speaker who was asked what Arlington needed, and he answered "three or four good funerals.") I served four terms, 1967-75, but it became too hard to balance my increased job responsibilities with City Council work, which takes a lot of time. (Most people don't realize that.)

I'm proud of the work we did on the council because the city was developing fast. My time on the council was when we brought the Rangers here [in 1972]. Tom Vandergriff had worked for nearly a decade trying to bring Major League Baseball to Arlington; it was a difficult deal to strike because Houston didn't want another major league team in Texas. Gene Autry, who at that time was a major league owner, cast the deciding vote in our favor (by proxy because he was in the hospital). We didn't even have a proper stadium! It was hard going at first, but the mayor was a very convincing guy.

How did you get involved with the Arlington Historical Society? What does local history mean to you?

I've known Geraldine Mills from the time she was a young lady. When my wife and I lived at our Mill Creek house, Geraldine's mother worked at a furniture store and came to our

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(Member Spotlight, from p. 7)

house several times to discuss furniture purchases. Geraldine's sister Barbara came with her, and it was Barbara who originally introduced me to the wonders of the Society. Believe it or not, Geraldine was very shy then but she very quickly developed into a strong leader. As a team we did some good things for the Society. We must not forget what some others like J. W. Dunlop and Wanda Marshall and Becky Tucker and others did to keep it alive.

It's important to remember the Arlington of my boyhood. It was a great little village to grow up in. We had so much freedom to roam. We knew everybody; the ladies would give you a piece of pie. It was an initiation ritual for boys to drink a quart of the mineral water from the fountain downtown! We had Arlington Downs, one of the three largest horse-racing tracks in the country at the time, and also the greyhound dog-racing track. Most of the great old houses have been torn down, and also the cotton gins that were once located on Center Street and South Street, but we have photographs to remind us, thanks to J.W. Dunlop, who went around town talking to the old people, asking to copy their old photographs. Not everything was good, but Arlington was such a pleasant place to live. It still is.

You've lived in Arlington for almost ninety years, served our country in World War II, and contributed greatly to improving the city. What else would you like readers to know about you?

I'm not outstanding in any way. I've been blessed with lots of things, a good marriage, a good job, and many good friends. I've always had lots of support; just having good health is important. I will be 98 soon; I was never in a hospital until I was 90.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DOLAND
August 7



NORTH TEXAS GIVING DAY

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

6:00 am – Midnight

<https://www.northtexasgivingday.org/historicalarlington>

Mark your calendars for North Texas Giving Day! You may not be aware that the City of Arlington's subsidy and member dues cover only 30% of AHS annual expenses, with most of the rest of our budget coming from fundraising events like this one. Additional contributions from members and friends are essential. More information will be forthcoming via email about special prizes and the best time to donate. Many thanks to AHS board member Floreen Henry, who keeps tabs on the ever-changing rules for this important fundraiser.

(Book Review, from p. 3)

sentences by substituting different words or changing the word order. What I object to most, however, is Davis's wholesale replacement of "Mexicans," Dobie's term for Tejanos/ Mexican-Americans, with "Mexicanos," a term Dobie never used, because Davis thinks it sounds more "prideful." That criticism notwithstanding, by restoring Dobie to the pantheon of Texas writers, Davis has made a valuable contribution to Texas history.

To Be Reviewed in the Next Issue: Doug J. Swanson, *Cult of Glory: The Bold and Brutal History of the Texas Rangers* (Viking, 2020), a revisionist history of the Rangers that has garnered widespread praise in the national press. The author is a former investigative reporter for the *Dallas Morning News*. Suggestions of recent books for review in this column are always welcome and should be emailed to denise.youngblood@uvm.edu.

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Thank You! Every Little Bit Helps!

Letters to the Editor

(Response of Jim Cooper to "Growing Up in Arlington", part 1)

WOW!!! Did this article bring back some wonderful memories for me. I never did actually call Arlington my residence but I have spent some mighty good times there in the summers in the 1940's visiting my mother's parents Mattie Lee Lewis and Steven Greenberry Lewis who lived in the 200 block of West Abrams next door to the Baptist Church that burned during that time. Papa was a cobbler and had a shoe store in "downtown" Arlington and my cousin Margaret Lois Gardner and I spent some happy times visiting Papa at his shop because he let us take some leather scraps and always had a penny to give us when we visited. One of the fun things was to sit on the front porch of their home with Papa and count the cars going by. He would take Dallas and I would take Fort Worth and whoever counted the most cars won. There was not a prize, one of us just won.

I remember the Rexall drug store that was west of Papa's shop down by the mineral well where the proprietor had glued coins under the glass over the cabinet where people checked out and it was fun watching people trying to drag the coins off with their change. Of course I did the same thing at one time but enjoyed watching the others try in vain to drag the coins into their hand.

My father's dad, James Newton Cooper, owned the Cooper Hotel and I spent some good times there, except of course when he would grab and tickle me. I would also go across the street to Vandergriff Chevrolet and watch the mechanics work on vehicles. Of course that was the days before liability was an issue. My mother, father and I lived in the hotel one summer while my Uncle John Wesley Cooper was in the hospital and Daddy ran Uncle Johnny's café, until he was well enough to return to work. We would go back to Hillsboro on the weekend so that my Dad could take care of his feed business on Saturday and Sunday and then Sunday night we would go back to Arlington. My Uncle Howard Cooper had a taxi stand in the hotel and he and his family also lived in Arlington, as does his son William Howard Cooper at the present time.

James and Neil Tucker were also my cousins and they and my Aunt Mary lived just north of the First Methodist Church in a home that is no longer there.

One of the things I remember fondly was the occasional time Mama would give me a nickel and I would go to the grocery store down the street and buy a Dad's Old Fashioned Root Beer which I remember as being exceptionally cold, but probably wasn't.

I also visited my Aunt Luzzle Gardner, who taught piano in her home on Pecan Street where she lived with her daughter Margaret Lois and her older sister Mildred. I also remember when "Dead Man's Crossing" was out in the country on the west side of town but of course now is pretty much in the middle of things.

Obviously with the last name of Cooper I have quite a few ties to Arlington since my great grandfather was one of the founders. I remember when it was a small town just like all small towns in Texas at the time, but it was a fun time and I fondly remember a lot of the adventures I had there. I look forward to the subsequent parts of Fred Cook's story in future issues of the AHS Newsletter.

Jim Cooper
Waxahachie, TX