

RURAL AND URBAN BOOSTERISM IN TEXAS,  
1880s-1930s

by

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## ABSTRACT

### RURAL AND URBAN BOOSTERISM IN TEXAS, 1880s-1930s

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The second half of the nineteenth century saw a “civilizing” trend across the rural and urban West. In Texas boosters launched myriad campaigns emphasizing the close of the western frontier and the emergence of a more modern society. This paper examines the methods used by Texas boosters to attract new residents and visitors. While all booster campaigns relied on access to railroads, rural and urban boosters used different tactics to lure settlers to their part of the state. Rural boosters extolled the virtues of a simple life where a man could be his own boss and where there is room for everyone. Boosters for Dallas and Fort Worth, however, used local businesses, fairs, and civic improvements to promote their cities. While Dallas became a cotton exchange and commercial hub, Fort Worth became a cattle market and meat packing center. Fort Worth showcased its emergence as a modern, cultured city by hosting the Texas Spring Palace exhibition, just as Dallas used the State Fair of Texas and Texas Centennial Exhibition to the same ends. Because of Dallas and Fort Worth’s close proximity to each other an aggressive spirit of boosterism developed as each city competed for regional dominance. This paper explores the tactics used by boosters for both rural and urban areas and examines the success of those campaigns in transforming the Western frontier.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

A drive down any major Texas highway will prove that community boosterism is big business. Billboards invite drivers to “Ski Wichita Falls” or visit “The Home of Championship Rodeo in Mesquite.” Cities compete to attract corporate headquarters to their neighborhoods in anticipation of the economic benefits new jobs and taxes will bring to the community. Today’s boosterism includes television ads, billboards, travel brochures, and chamber of commerce propaganda that tout the benefits of living in or visiting Texas. From large urban areas such as the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex to the rural, rugged Big Bend area, local boosterism thrives at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Boosterism is not a twenty-first century development, however; boosterism played a critical role in Texas’ post-Civil War growth and development. A look at Texas boosterism from the late nineteenth century through the state’s Centennial celebration in 1936, a crowning example of Texas boosterism, provides an overview of how and why booster campaigns were carried out across Texas. Civil leaders, businesses, and even state run offices orchestrated booster campaigns targeted to specific demographics and tailored to specific parts of Texas, similar to modern advertising campaigns.<sup>1</sup> These boosterism campaigns coincided with the close of the western frontier at the end of the nineteenth century when the West no longer beckoned merely to the adventurous minors and homesteaders who braved the Wild West in search of gold, land, and a new life far from the culture and "civilization" of America's eastern

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<sup>1</sup> Rowland Tappan Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 17.

cities. Once railroad lines stretched across the continent and provided comparatively easier access to Western cities than Americans had enjoyed just a few years earlier, a new westward push began. By the turn of the twentieth century, Western cities and railroad companies actively courted settlers willing to uproot their comfortable lives back east and relocate in the newly emerging civility of the rural corners and urban centers of the West.

The sheer size of Texas necessitated more than just state level promotional campaigns to attract new visitors and residents. These boosterism campaigns were used to promote the state as a whole, rural Texas, and the state's emerging urban centers. At all three levels, boosters strove to portray Texas as a land of opportunity, modernized, and civilized after the Civil War. Rural booster propaganda described Texas a land of opportunity where men could farm the Texas plains as pioneers had done just decades earlier but with the help of boosters' civilizing frontier improvements such as artesian wells and onsite farming assistance. Urban boosters also emphasized the civilized and modern elements of their cities by highlighting civic improvements, economic opportunities, and cultural features in their cities. Chapter 1 looks briefly at Texas' state run Bureau of Immigration and its efforts to recraft Texas' image following the Civil War, but the central focus of the chapter is on a group of boosters who worked to promote *rural* West Texas by advertising a tamed rural environment vast enough to have room for everyone but civilized enough to not be called the frontier. The idea of a civilized frontier encapsulates the image rural West Texas promoters were selling during the late nineteenth century, and serves as the basis for Western urban boosterism during the same period.

For late nineteenth century western cities, convincing their target audiences that western cities could rival their long established eastern counterparts posed a particular problem—chiefly that their subjects lagged so far behind eastern economic and cultural development. Historians who have studied urban boosterism for this region have identified recurrent themes and approaches that emerged as a solution. Most common among these interrelated themes are, modernism, cosmopolitanism, and permanence. Boosters sought to convince prospective residents that their cities were the equals of established Eastern cities, claiming up to date

utilities and conveniences, refined culture and the stability of thriving businesses. Their approaches therefore often centered on luring railroads to town, hosting fairs and exhibitions as a means of showcasing cities, and publishing newspapers and fictional works to promote urban growth. Historians including J. Philip Gruen and Erik Monkkonen note the emphasis on modernity and permanence in Western boosterism. Because Western cities developed quickly they were forced to reinvent themselves as their population and economic bases grew. This newness was juxtaposed with a desire for permanence by Western promoters, which is apparent in booster references to local architecture's "civilizing" qualities and Western cities' establishment of cultural institutions such as theaters.<sup>2</sup> Historians also look at the push for civic improvements that changed municipal governments and encouraged them to look at long range urban planning.<sup>3</sup> Historians refer to this collectively as Western cities' "emerging civic identity" which arose out of the desire for modern, cosmopolitan, and permanent cities that resulted in American and not strictly western cities.<sup>4</sup>

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century North Texas saw the development of two urban centers, Dallas and Fort Worth, which followed the basic pattern the literature leads us to expect. As we will see in chapters 2 and 3, boosters for both cities worked to create modern, cosmopolitan centers, and used fairs or exhibitions in conjunction with civic improvements to draw attention to their cities. Successful promotional campaigns put new Western cities like Dallas and Fort Worth on the map by cementing each city's presence in North Texas and their economic roles in the region.

Fort Worth, which gained economic power as a railroad hub during the cattle boom that followed the Civil War, established itself as a modern city, proud of its Western cow town past

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<sup>2</sup> Philip J. Gruen, "The Urban Wonders: City Tourism in the Late-Nineteenth-Century American West," *Journal of the West* 41 (Spring 2002), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Eric H. Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns 1780-1980* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Frieda Knobloch, "Creating the Cowboy State: Culture and Underdevelopment in Wyoming Since 1867," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 2, 1.

but cosmopolitan enough to host a state-wide exhibition, embrace opera, and fund infrastructure improvements to the city. Although Fort Worth was never cosmopolitan in the sense of cities such as New York or Paris, Fort Worth boosters worked to create a culture that could compete with other modern American cities, and it is this developing awareness of culture and refinement that the term cosmopolitan refers to. While Fort Worth followed closely the strategies of other formerly frontier western cities, Dallas had a somewhat different strategy. Situated just 30 miles to the east, Dallas cemented its ties to the East as a means of shedding its Southern, Confederate connections. Dallas became a center for the cotton trade and through booster efforts including the State Fair of Texas, Dallas emerged as a hub for big business complete with a comprehensive urban plan in place for city development. By identifying their cities with the economies of the surrounding communities, Fort Worth with the cattle ranching to west and Dallas with East Texas agriculture, both cities thrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Because both cities were able to flourish economically, they competed for regional dominance in North Texas leading to a friendly rivalry between the cities. This competition was fueled by aggressive boosterism by both Fort Worth's and Dallas' business and civic leaders and resulted in the elaborate promotional schemes discussed in chapters 2 and 3.<sup>5</sup> Although this rivalry played a role in the boosterism campaigns of Dallas and Fort Worth, this paper will focus instead on the similarities of the tactics used by both cities as they worked to promote their cities.

In the large and ambitious stated of Texas boosters from across the state faces the challenge of attracting new visitors and residents amid fierce competition. These campaigns, whether state run, rural, or urban, had a similar goal--to encourage settlement by assuaging fears--but took slightly different tacks. The comparison of boosterism campaigns in Texas provides the best testimony to the considerable variation in promises and approaches to late nineteenth century boostersim, while all of them ultimately centered around the same core

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<sup>5</sup>Char Miller and Heywood T. Sanders, eds., *Urban Texas Politics and Development* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990), 29.

themes of modernism, permanence, and cosmopolitanism, different contexts and personalities often meant some subtle differences in tactics.

CHAPTER 2  
STATE AND RURAL BOOSTERISM

Texas jumped on the boosterism bandwagon with the creation of the Texas Bureau of Immigration in the 1869 state constitution. The bureau was charged with promoting immigration to Texas, while simultaneously reinventing Texas' image after the Civil War. The bureau posted representatives in the major ports of Europe and America to draw European immigrants and Americans to Texas, and it published booster pamphlets describing Texas and the opportunities available to immigrants in the state.<sup>1</sup> One such pamphlet, *Texas the Home for the Emigrant from Everywhere*, published in 1875, promised "true and reliable" information about Texas, and explicitly addressed the post Civil War social climate in Texas.<sup>2</sup> Aside from the requisite boasting proclaiming the benefits of Texas' fertile soil and wonderful climate, the Bureau of Immigration focused on separating Texas from other former Confederate states and its own western, uncivilized past. The authors tried to distance Texas from the Confederacy by stating that "Texas steadily advanced while other Southern states languished," a jab at the South's struggling agrarian economy. Texas, on the other hand, enjoyed a rapidly expanding economy based on manufacturing along the Gulf Coast, agriculture across much of the state, and a large ranching industry.<sup>3</sup> But Texas boosters also wanted to counter the idea that Texans were subject to Indian raids and lawlessness: "Law and order are as rigidly maintained, and crime as

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<sup>1</sup> 1869 Texas State Constitution, Article XI Immigration, University of Texas Jamail Center for Legal Research, Tarlton Law Library University of Texas School of Law, <http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/constitutions/text/image/G33.html>

<sup>2</sup> *Texas the Home for the Emigrant from Everywhere*, Houston: A.C., Gray State Printer, 1875, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries' Digital Project Unit, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/permalink/meta-ptb-28586>, 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 and 32.

promptly punished as in any of the States.” After making these assurances, the Bureau of Immigration laid out statistics on population, railroad expansion, crops, and livestock all standard information in booster propaganda.<sup>4</sup> This statewide boosterism soon led to more locally driven promotional campaigns.

It should be acknowledged that the 1875 boosters’ image of Texas had a tenuous relationship to reality. Texas Rangers arrested at no less than 40 outlaws in Kimble County alone in 1877, while at least three separate Indian tribes were still raiding the state and as late as 1880 the U.S. Cavalry was still coping with Apache incursions.<sup>5</sup> The state was plagued by outlaw gangs and then by vigilantes who sprang up to counter them. It wasn’t until the mid-1880s that most of the sources driving the violence were abated.

Once boosterism became established in Texas, two distinct types of regional promotion developed, one from the cities and the other from land developers in the southern and western parts of the state. Spurred by the Midwestern civic and state exhibitions, Texas promoters hustled to meet the boosterism challenge. Urban boosters concocted myriad schemes to lure settlers to their growing cities, but further south and west, land speculators divvied up small parcels of land and offered eastern businessmen a way out of the rat race. The theme for this group was that Texas was a place where a man could be his own boss and make thousands of dollars living a simpler more satisfying lifestyle. These boosterism campaigns lured settlers west with tales of Texas’ merits as a land of opportunity and diversity, while eastern urban development and southern lack of development created distinctive if related approaches at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

While rural boosterism campaigns worked towards the same goal as urban campaigns the promoters approached their project from different perspectives. What appealed to settlers moving to a rural agricultural community was unlikely to have matched that of urban businessmen. Consequently, the two types of booster campaigns differed significantly. The

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>5</sup> Randolph Campbell, *Gone to Texas* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 304-305.

targets of the campaigns, methods of spreading the word, and the aspects of life in Texas that appealed to the two target groups were naturally distinctive. In a state the size of Texas, the climate, environment, and people of a region varied greatly from place to place. No one promotional campaign could have sufficed, and the uniqueness of these booster campaigns provide a look at how different circumstances could create unique campaigns.

As Indians became less of a threat, and as railroads made access to western land more practical, white Americans came to occupy all parts of the West in the 1880s, leading land speculators to dollar signs. Once the U.S. military and railroad industry removed obstacles to western settlement, the land west of Fort Worth opened for settlement and development.<sup>6</sup> Both private land speculators and railroad companies recognized an opportunity to make money and populate the Plains with potential customers. Government land grants to railroad companies left railroads with a unique opportunity to cultivate a customer base throughout the very areas they planned to serve. At the turn of the twentieth century, land speculators seized the opportunity to buy up and subdivide cattle ranches as the cattle boom came to an end.<sup>7</sup> They recognized that the development of railroad lines and easier accessibility to western lands increased the number of people willing to make a move west. Although increasing railroad accessibility influenced development, access to water for irrigation in south and west Texas was equally important. Artesian wells, first put into place in these areas at the end of the nineteenth century, opened many regions of Texas up to farming.<sup>8</sup> Advertisements for the Cross S Ranch development in Southwest Texas incorporated the new irrigation method into its logo. The small outline of Texas showed rivers running throughout the state and waterfalls flowing at the site of the ranch near Crystal City. Irrigation made the land marketable and proof of the artesian

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<sup>6</sup> David L. Caffey, "We Have the Land; Now for the People: Boosterism in Frontier West Texas," *The Permian Historical Annual XXI* 21 (1981): 49.

<sup>7</sup> Steven F. Mehls, "Garden in the Grasslands Revisited: Railroad Promotional Efforts and the Settlement of the Texas Plains," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book 1984* 60 (1984): 51.

<sup>8</sup> Cross S Ranch brochure, 1910, Anson Drinkwater collection, Special Collections, University of Texas Arlington, Arlington.

well system increased the chance people would take advantage of the land deals. Once irrigation was possible, land speculators began buying up land and marketing the idea of farming to urban Eastern Americans.

Private land speculators, such as E.J. Buckingham of San Antonio, tried to persuade settlers to invest in land deals. Buckingham worked from his home office in San Antonio marketing parcels of the Cross S Ranch in the early twentieth century. Formerly a working ranch in Dimmit and Zavala counties in south Texas, by 1910 the Cross S Ranch was available for purchase. Buckingham bought the ranch and divided it into ten-acre tracts. He created an entire community at the Cross S Ranch, complete with a town, schools, churches, and convenient railroad access. Not unlike today's self-contained resort style communities with private golf course, pool, hiking trails, day care, and workout centers, developments such as the Cross S Ranch offered all in one community living. Buckingham emphasized that buying into the Cross S Ranch did not mean pioneering, as it would have in the mid-nineteenth century. Buckingham had thought of everything. No longer did moving west mean "pioneering...in a cold and inhospitable land".<sup>9</sup> How could such conveniences and guarantees not appeal to potential settlers?

Buckingham took nothing for granted and approached his boosterism campaign from two more perspectives just in case the convenience of the Cross S Ranch did not appeal to his constituency. He also tried selling his land by outlining the benefits of being your own boss, setting your own hours, and spending more time with the family. Buckingham's promotional literature described the Cross S Ranch as "a principality within an empire [Texas]," and a place where the government works for the people rather than catering to special interest groups.<sup>10</sup> Buckingham went on to stress that Texas was no dictatorship, perhaps a reference to the political machines controlling city governments in some Eastern cities during the period.

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<sup>9</sup> W.J. Romig to Anson Drinkwater, 22 July 1910, Anson Drinkwater collection, Special Collections, University of Texas Arlington, Arlington: 2.

<sup>10</sup> Romig to Drinkwater, 16 July 1910, 1.

Furthermore, he describes a farmer of the Cross S Ranch as “prince in his own right”.<sup>11</sup> Buckingham claimed, “Your family will enjoy the blessings of bright sunshine, pure air, fresh vegetables, your own milk, poultry, etc.”.<sup>12</sup> With such assurances Buckingham’s booster literature seemingly created a Garden of Eden, out of what had once been a cattle ranch in South Texas.

Should potential customers doubt his word, Buckingham provided testimonials in the literature he distributed to targeted individuals. He included several success stories in his brochure, and repeatedly cajoled the reader to “see these conditions with your own eyes” and to visit with the successful farmers in person on the Cross S Ranch.<sup>13</sup> Buckingham’s last promotional tactic targeted Eastern city dwellers. Buckingham’s overall strategy was to take the fear and uncertainty out of moving west and starting a new life. He created a self-contained community on the Cross S Ranch by bringing everything the settlers would need to within easy reach of their new homes, including all that was necessary to farm, even for urban residents who might find such a change too drastic. The climate at the Cross S Ranch was almost perfect, according to Buckingham, with year round farming and enough rainfall to water crops<sup>14</sup> and an irrigation system just in case Zeus and his lightning bolts decided not to cooperate with Buckingham’s plans. For those from Eastern cities who had little idea of how to farm, what crops to plant, or how to make a profit at it, Buckingham had another answer. Just as he had with every other aspect of the Cross S Ranch, Buckingham created an ideal working environment for his clients. Buckingham offered the services of an on site farming expert to help new farmers learn their chosen trade. Buckingham also detailed what crops to plant and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Romig to Drinkwater, 22 July 1910, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Cross S Ranch brochure, 1910.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

what their anticipated profits would be.<sup>15</sup> He literally covered all the bases; after examining Buckingham's brochure and letters promoting the Cross S Ranch, an early twentieth century settler must have thought the deal was almost too good to be true.

Just as individual land speculators such as Buckingham marketed Western land, Western railroad companies also became heavily involved in land promotion and marketing efforts.<sup>16</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, a myth persisted that the arid land of Texas and Great American Desert would be changed into a fertile agricultural garden as people established agriculture in the area.<sup>17</sup> Obviously, the theory was ludicrous, but with the advent of irrigation, such as the artesian wells used in South Texas, new regions did legitimately open up to agriculture. However, even prior to irrigation, railroad companies and land speculators emphasized the lushness of the American West. To drive home the point, railroad companies turned to "established farming regions to give testimony for publication about the soil [and] climate".<sup>18</sup>

Buckingham's Cross S Ranch brochures closely parallel railroad and land speculator promotional materials from the same period. Several topics were standard fare for these boosterism campaigns, and Buckingham's example is no exception. Virtually without fail, boosters discussed climate, soil, living conditions, water, and access to railroads. Promoters and speculators identified these points as critical to selling their land.<sup>19</sup> The literature boasts about the mild winters settlers would experience. Letters announced that the soil was more fertile than any currently being farmed, and many companies even employed an agricultural

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<sup>15</sup> Romig to Drinkwater, 16 July 1910, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Mehls, "Garden of the Grasslands Revisited," 47.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Caffey, "We Have the Land; Now for the People," 52-53.

expert to help settlers new to farming make a success of their endeavor. Perhaps most important, however, remained the accessibility and dependability of the water supply.

After the turn of the twentieth century, railroad companies such as the Fort Worth and Denver launched plans to expand service in the Texas Panhandle and throughout West Texas. Land promotion soon developed as a means of offsetting the cost of building new lines and to create a permanent customer base along newly built tracks.<sup>20</sup> Following the droughts of the 1890s, the fertile garden myth was no longer convincing. But railroad companies and land speculators easily changed their tune; the West became a land of opportunity. Early twentieth century promotional literature emphasized that moving west no longer meant facing Indian attack, buffalo, or roguish cowboys. The new west was safe for civilization.<sup>21</sup>

Texas boosterism took another form during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Aside from railroad companies and individual land speculators peddling land in south and west Texas, city boosters created elaborate campaigns to bring people to their metropolises. Again railroads acted as a catalyst for these operations, and it is to these urban boosterism efforts that we will turn to next. Looking more closely at the expansion of Dallas and Fort Worth in this period demonstrates how urban boosterism differed from rural boosterism campaigns of the same period. Urban Texas boosters created elaborate campaigns to bring people to their cities. Western towns showed substantial growth after a railroad arrived in town, and civic boosters sought to capitalize on this potential for growth.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>21</sup> Mehls, "Gardens of the Grasslands Revisited," 53.

CHAPTER 3  
COWTOWN AND THE TEXAS SPRING PALACE

Fort Worth was the meeting place of the “legally constituted society of the east and the free and untrammelled life of the west,” according to local booster and historian B.B. Paddock in 1906.<sup>1</sup> Paddock’s statement goes a long way toward explaining Fort Worth’s history, its drive to become a modern city, and its contemporary identity as the place where the west begins. The fact that local boosters recognized this dichotomy in Fort Worth at the turn of the twentieth century explains the strong booster efforts supported by Fort Worth promoters as a means of both improving the city and crafting a positive, modern image for Fort Worth. Just as the Texas Bureau of Immigration tried to deemphasize the state’s woolly past by accentuating the safe and lawful culture in turn-of-the-century Texas, Fort Worth’s local boosters worked to craft a cosmopolitan image through booster propaganda that would dismiss mistaken beliefs about their city and draw attention to its latest business accomplishments, while romanticizing its lifestyle.

Fort Worth began as a military outpost along the western frontier in 1849, as a buffer between American settlement and American Indian raids on the encroaching settlers. As the frontier continued to move west, so did the military, and by 1853 the army withdrew from Fort Worth to a new post further west. Although the military presence was short lived in North Texas, it was the catalyst for settlement, and the hardy civilians who had moved to the area remained, using the former army barracks as the town center. This “nucleus of citizens [who] possessed...a quality of enterprise not to be found in the ordinary frontier village,” as Paddock referred to them, began building their town and worked to move the Tarrant county seat from Birdville to Fort Worth. Though we have no way of estimating the truth of Paddock’s description of the town, his

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<sup>1</sup> B.B. Paddock, ed., *History and Biographical Record of North and West Texas* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1906), 194.

persistence in repeating it, along with all other boosters of the city, suggests they saw it as an essential sign of the city's commitment to progress.<sup>2</sup> By linking Fort Worth's first settlers' determination to form a town to its late nineteenth century expansion, Paddock created a history of growth and progress for Fort Worth. The emphasis on history or permanence in conjunction with growth and modernization fit squarely with broader booster literature from the period, and are reflected throughout Fort Worth's booster campaigns.

With the outset of the Civil War, Fort Worth became the county seat, and its growth continued due to local promoters and their dogged campaign to bring the railroad to town. As early as 1858, civic leaders proposed Fort Worth as a junction for the Southern Pacific and Houston & Texas Central railroads, but despite the enterprising and forward thinking efforts by local leaders, it was almost 20 years before the railroad finally reached Fort Worth.<sup>3</sup> When the president of the Texas & Pacific Railroad visited town in 1872, serious efforts began to bring the railroad to Fort Worth; early civic leaders Major K.M. VanZandt and E.M. Daggett donated land to the Texas & Pacific Railroad as part of the effort.<sup>4</sup> During the second half of the nineteenth century, community leaders such as VanZandt, Daggett, and John Peter Smith worked tirelessly to promote Fort Worth's growth, a commitment that undoubtedly encouraged the town's rapid expansion. Boosters began actively courting settlers and railroads to town to capitalize on the cattle boom that bolstered the Fort Worth economy during the same period. Boosters and civic leaders recognized the railroad as a key to development and worked hard to promote Fort Worth through immigration agencies, railroad advertising and propaganda, national newspapers, and through local events aimed at showcasing the city, its features, and its citizens.

Many of these civic promotions were led by B.B. Paddock, one of Fort Worth's most ardent boosters, who arrived in town in 1872 after serving as a captain in the Confederate Army.

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<sup>2</sup> B.B. Paddock, ed., *History of Texas: Fort Worth and the Texas Northwest Edition, vol. II* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1922), 599-600.

<sup>3</sup> *History and Biographical Record*, 176-177.

<sup>4</sup> B.B. Paddock, ed., "Early Days in Fort Worth: Much of Which I Saw and Part of Which I Was," Special Collections Department, University of Texas at Arlington, 1-2.

Paddock quickly became involved in local politics and business, eventually serving as a state legislator and mayor of Fort Worth, as well as starting the Fort Worth Board of Trade and authoring several books promoting both Fort Worth and Texas. Paddock became editor of the *Fort Worth Democrat*, the city's weekly newspaper, which he used to promote Fort Worth. Paddock recognized boosterism's importance in creating a thriving, vibrant city out of the small frontier town, and he wasted no time in promoting Fort Worth with the newspaper and with railroad companies both locally and outside Texas.<sup>5</sup>

Present circumstances rarely daunted Paddock; he dreamed big and worked to make those dreams a reality. The scope of Paddock's boosterism campaigns, ranging from the Texas Spring Palace exhibition he presided over to his work outside the state to promote Fort Worth, illustrated his goals and determination. Fort Worth suffered an economic recession in the early 1870s when work on the railroad from Dallas to Fort Worth was suspended, and although many prominent citizens left Fort Worth for Dallas or moved further west, Paddock remained and continued to work tirelessly to bring the railroad to Fort Worth, make city improvements, and create booster campaigns to bring more people to town.

Paddock's vision of Fort Worth as a business and railroad mecca blossomed several years before the railroad reached town; his 1873 Tarantula map depicted numerous railroad lines emanating from Fort Worth and was predictive of Paddock's grandiose style of boosterism and of Fort Worth's future as a railroad hub and cattle town. Paddock called the railroad lines "the most important factors in the development of [the] city,"<sup>6</sup> and he continued to encourage additional railroads to stop in Fort Worth even after the 1876 arrival of the railroad. He wanted to see his Tarantula map vision of Fort Worth completed. Paddock took an extended trip to New York in 1886 to urge railroad companies and investors to extend their rail lines through Fort Worth. Paddock spent months securing backing for an additional rail line. In letters to his wife Emma, Paddock described being frustrated by the lengthy negotiations, but buoyed by

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<sup>5</sup> "Early Days in Fort Worth," 23.

<sup>6</sup> *History of Texas*, 509.

telegrams from Fort Worth encouraging him to continue talks. Paddock believed that his negotiations were important to Fort Worth, and even as he wrote about deals that fell through or being unsure about whether a final commitment could be reached with investors, Paddock's determination was clear. The railroad was the right thing for Fort Worth, and he was the right man to make the deal.<sup>7</sup>

Paddock's boosterism efforts reached far beyond bringing railroads to Fort Worth; as he used his own business to promote the area. His weekly paper, the Fort Worth *Democrat*, was one of his most important tools. He peppered pages of news and ads with booster propaganda. The *Democrat* touted local and civic improvements, as well as endorsing statewide boosterism efforts from Austin. Paddock used the paper to increase civic pride by highlighting modernization efforts throughout the city; the paper became a means to garner public support for local improvements and booster campaigns. Paddock himself said:

The *Democrat* was behind every improvement in Fort Worth; it urged the construction of railroads unceasingly; also street railways, local improvements such as sidewalks, fire department, street paving, water works, each as successively needed.<sup>8</sup>

But he also knew that the *Democrat* would reach more than just the local population, making it an easy way to promote Fort Worth. The paper periodically printed statistics about Texas and Fort Worth, which highlighted local improvements, population, and the climate. For example, an 1873 article reported that all visitors "seem[ed] to be enchanted with the grandeur and beauty of the area," and recommended Texas, namely Tarrant County, as the perfect place to settle.<sup>9</sup> The article claimed Texas' generous homestead exemption and the amount of land available for settlement were incentives for settlers to move to Texas, but also lamented that not enough settlers and immigrants knew what Texas had to offer. The *Democrat's* writer was convinced that

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<sup>7</sup> B.B. Paddock Papers, 1886, Special Collections Department, University of Texas at Arlington.

<sup>8</sup> *History and Biographical Record*, 195.

<sup>9</sup> *Fort Worth Democrat*. January 25, 1873, 2-3.

more people would move to Texas rather than following the trend and settling in the northern plains if they were better informed. The author went on to include an excerpt from an 1872 booster pamphlet that characterized Texas as “the lone star that shines brightest above all others of the great constellation of stars forming the American Union.”<sup>10</sup> Similar booster articles appear throughout the run of the *Democrat*. These pieces ran consistently on the first few pages of the paper alongside articles about the approaching Texas & Pacific Railway. Promoting Fort Worth and Texas was not an afterthought with the paper but became a central purpose of the paper during Paddock’s tenure.

Paddock also used the *Democrat* to correct misconceptions about Texas and Fort Worth. The paper picked up a story run by *The Montgomery Advertiser and Mail*, indicating that the opportunities described in Texas booster literature were untrue. According to the Alabama article, Texas land was not as fertile, the climate not as good, and the cities not as modern as promised. Paddock, through the *Democrat*, repudiated the claims in true booster fashion. The *Democrat* insisted that the booster literature was without a doubt true, but only if the people coming to Texas were hardworking and dedicated. Crops did not grow themselves in Texas, but if a farmer worked hard every day, Texas soil could produce the best crop he ever planted. If a settler’s experience in Texas was bad, it was the settler’s fault. Texas was paradise.<sup>11</sup>

Paddock’s boosterism efforts looked inward as well as outward. Making civic improvements was equally important to him as bringing new settlers to the area. Paddock believed that such internal improvements were vital to drawing people to Fort Worth, as they helped to create a new, modern, and sophisticated image for the city. As the cattle boom waned, Fort Worth became more of a live stock center than a Wild West town. Gunslingers and cowboys were replaced by businessmen and civic leaders. Fort Worth leaders wanted to shed the Wild West image and promoted Fort Worth as a business and cultural center in North Texas.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. February 1, 1873, 3.

Actually the transition took longer than Paddock anticipated. In the spring of 1886 the Great Southwest Strike by the Knights of Labor shut down five Texas railroads, including all those of Fort Worth. For a time, huge crowds of workers and sympathizers turned out daily at the Missouri Pacific depot, preventing trains from leaving. Some supplies had to be hauled in by wagon. The climactic event occurred when former city marshal, Jim Courtright turned up. The heavy-drinking gunslinger, wanted for murder in New Mexico Territory, was given police authority by federal, state and municipal officials. Fort Worth was an armed camp by the time Courtright and a dozen deputies rode a train out of downtown on April 3, 1886. Two miles south of the depot they shot it out with five strike sympathizers. Two men on each side were severely wounded, and one deputy was killed. The strike was dissolving by this time, but three days after the battle the labor forces elected an insurgent mayor and two Knights were elected to the city council. A year later Courtright was slain in a face-to-face duel downtown with gambling rival Luke Short.<sup>12</sup> None of these events made it into Paddock's talking points.

Near the turn of the twentieth century, Paddock reflected on the growth of Fort Worth with an insight into his interpretation of the importance of the sidewalk and streetlight campaigns. Development had erased "the primitive order of things" so quickly that long-time citizens nearly forgot the "'wild and woolly' aspects of existence" from just a few years earlier,"<sup>13</sup> Paddock asserted. This reference to the cowboy and six-shooter days confirms the extent of the changes Fort Worth underwent in a little more than a decade. The city's emergence as a railroad hub with well lit streets brought more people and business to Fort Worth and set the stage for a more elaborate booster campaign that would establish Fort Worth as a modern, cosmopolitan city.

To this end, Paddock led a group of local boosters in the creation of a Texas exhibition designed to rival the world expositions of the period. Paddock and local Denver and Fort Worth railroad immigration agent, R.A. Cameron, concocted this elaborate spectacle to bring national

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<sup>12</sup> Ruth Allen, *The Great Southwest Strike* (Austin: University of Texas Bureau of Research in the Social sciences, 1942); Robert DeArment, *Jim Courtright of Fort Worth: his life and legend* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> *Historical and Biographical Record*, 194.

attention and visitors to Texas. Their dream took shape with the development of the Texas Spring Palace, designed “in contradistinction to the winter palaces of the north.”<sup>14</sup> The creators envisioned an exposition that would showcase Texas to the country and world by displaying Texas’ resources and products.<sup>15</sup> Planning for the Spring Palace exhibition began in January 1889, and the inaugural run kicked off in May 1889. Civic boosters conceived of the Texas Spring Palace, organized the exhibition, and constructed a building to house the Spring Palace within five months. Without ample support from the public and political and business communities the scheme could not have succeeded, but Fort Worth’s boosters and citizens took great pride in hosting the exposition and created a unique venue and uniquely local entertainment for the Spring Palace exhibition.

An architectural marvel, the Spring Palace became a showcase. A local architectural firm and construction company built the wooden edifice in a mere month. Despite the speed with which it was erected, the Spring Palace dominated the Fort Worth skyline architecturally, mostly because of its sheer size and the fact that it represented a mixture of architectural styles with towers, turrets, and a Moorish dome (see Figure 2). Spring Palace propaganda referred to the building as novel and unique, and it must have stood out against the Fort Worth backdrop.<sup>16</sup> However, even more impressive than its physical design was the Texas Spring Palace's decor. Decorated from top to bottom, inside and out with the products, natural resources, and artwork of the state, it took a team of three hundred thirty- six men and women six weeks to decorate the building completely.<sup>17</sup> The "Descriptive Story of the Texas Spring Palace," written

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<sup>14</sup> *Dallas Morning News*. “Fort Worth Local Notes.” January 16, 1889, 5.

<sup>15</sup> “The Karporama of Texas.” (Fort Worth: The Texas Spring Palace, 1889). Fort Worth Public Library, Fort Worth, 47.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>17</sup> E.D. Allen, “The Texas Spring Palace: A Complete and Categorical Description of the Marvelous Temple, Its Origin and the Causes Leading Up to its Grand Success,” (Fort Worth: Texas Printing and Lithography Co., 1889), Ruby Schmidt Collection, Fort Worth Public Library, Fort Worth, 8.

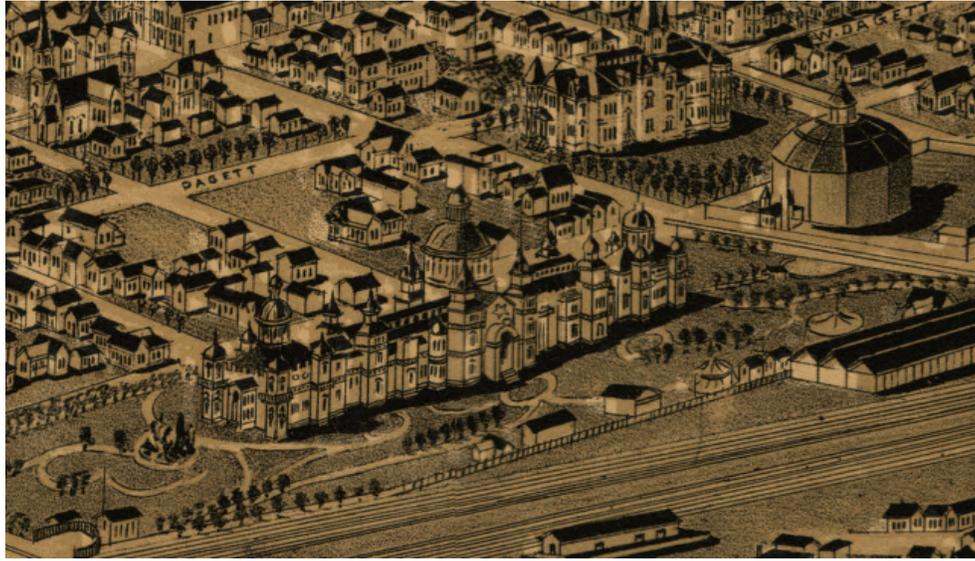


Figure 1. Close up view of Fort Worth Perspective map of 1891, which shows the Texas Spring Palace in the center of the picture.<sup>18</sup>

by the Spring Palace's chief decorator, E.D. Allen, detailed the materials and designs used to adorn the building. Decorators used corn to create a large star on the front of the building and placed a taxidermied steer above the entrance. Other Texas resources such as cotton, sea shells, wheat, horns, pelts, and many others adorned the interior and exterior of the structure.<sup>19</sup> The exhibition highlighted different counties, regions, and peoples of Texas by using the native resources of each area for decorations, while the exterior of the Texas Spring Palace became a conglomeration of Texas' natural resources.

The Texas Spring Palace was conceived of as an advertisement for Texas, but Fort Worth seized the opportunity as host city of the exhibition to share the spotlight. In spite of the fact that Fort Worth no longer functioned as an army outpost or even marked the western frontier by the end of the nineteenth century, its image as a Wild West town persisted. The image held because of Jim Courtright's recent, well advertised gunplay and because of the presence of

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<sup>18</sup> Henry Wellge, "Perspective map of Fort Worth, Texas," [map online] (Milwaukee: American Publishing Company, 1891, accessed 20 October 2007); available from American Memory project of the Library of Congress online <http://www.loc.gov>.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

Hell's Half Acre, a notorious gambling and vice section in the lower part of downtown. Fort Worth boosters, who feared this image kept investors and migrants away, worked hard during the run of the Spring Palace to show off the city's cosmopolitan character.

One significant element of this effort was to project a more cultural side to the city, and boosters used a spin on contemporary popular art to this end. In 1888, the year before the Texas Spring Palace opened, Fort Worth boosters produced a parody of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, which became *The Capitalist or The City of Fort Worth*. The title alone conveys the thrust of the boosters' meaning; Fort Worth had become a city, a place of commerce in the newly developed American west. Fort Worth was now established, modern and cosmopolitan, and paved streets, permanent buildings, and upstanding people now replaced gunfights, saloons and transient cowboys.

The play itself confirmed that message. As the first act opens Fort Worth's leading business men wait for train loads of visitors to arrive in the city.<sup>20</sup> This same scene played out during both runs of the Texas Spring Palace when visitors arrived from each state in the Union and most territories.<sup>21</sup> They sang, "We are gentlemen of Fort Worth: From near and from afar, From all corners of the earth, The people come to see..."<sup>22</sup> To drive home the point that Texas no longer relied solely on cattle ranching for income, the central character, Yankee-Doo, whose name is perhaps a nod to the northerners and easterners Fort Worth boosters hoped to attract with this literature, introduces himself by saying that he has sold his cattle and wishes to move to the city and invest the profits in business.<sup>23</sup> Yankee-Doo's move from rural cattle rancher to city business man illustrates the transformation that late nineteenth century boosters wanted to portray for Texas.

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<sup>20</sup> *The Capitalist or The City of Fort Worth*, (Fort Worth: Fort Worth Board of Trade, 1888), The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries' Digital Project Unit, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/permalink/meta-pt-29756>, 5.

<sup>21</sup> "Capitalists at Fort Worth", *The New York Times*, May 22, 1890.

<sup>22</sup> *The Capitalist*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

As the business leaders describe their home to Yankee-Doo, the audience hears a stirring description of Texas. Push-Much sings of the free land and opportunities available in Texas:

We now proclaim we've lots of room,  
And ask the whole world here to come....  
Of acres, we've two million score  
For those who knock at our front door,  
And fifteen million people more  
Won't make us overcrowded.<sup>24</sup>

These lines reinforce the booster propaganda found in the state Bureau of Immigration publications and Fort Worth's local paper, *The Democrat*, and they were echoed over and over the following year in Spring Palace literature. The Chorus goes on to sing the praises of Fort Worth by listing its ample railroads, good streets and sidewalks, and its numerous churches and colleges.<sup>25</sup> Again, reinforcing municipal improvements that boosters like Paddock had been promoting for years.

Civic pride and local rivalry are evident when the hero of the story, Kokonut, is threatened with banishment to Dallas.

To sit in solemn silence in a dull dead town,  
In a sleepy little village with the business  
going down,  
Awaiting the arrival of a circus and a clown,  
Or the building of a railroad for to give it some renown.<sup>26</sup>

The jab at Dallas fits with the Fort Worth boosterism themes from the late nineteenth-century. Because of the proximity of the two North Texas cities, they competed for business, railroads, and population and a friendly rivalry developed.

Fort Worth civic boosters produced their second parody of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, the *H.M.S. Pinafore*, as part of the Spring Palace exposition. The Fort Worth version of *H.M.S. Pinafore* premiered in 1889 during the inaugural run of the Texas Spring Palace. The play essentially followed the original plot, but altered the settings and character names to suit the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 14.

Texas locale. The new characters included Colonel Longhorn, King of the Cowboys; Captain Bigbug, a Fort Worth civic leader; Dick Badegg, a cowboy; and Little Chilitop, a Mexican Tamale woman, among others. Smith did not create this list of characters by chance. He used them to dispel misconceptions about Fort Worth, and more generally Texas. He revisited themes from his *Mikado* parody in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and made more pointed stabs at Fort Worth's cowboy past with Dick Badegg and the reformed Colonel Longhorn. Smith also used Longhorn and Bigbug to draw attention to Fort Worth's newer business endeavors.

The plot of the *H.M.S. Pinafore* parody centers on the impending marriage of Captain Bigbug's daughter, Josephine. Will she choose Colonel Longhorn whom she does not love or Alf Ryestraw, the local policeman, whom she loves but can not marry because of his lowly social standing? In the end, unrequited love is finally returned and a years old mix up about the owner of a heifer and the owner of a bull are set right, while everyone finds love and happiness in Fort Worth. The plot, however, is largely irrelevant; the purpose of the production, as was true with *The Mikado* parody, was to create a new sophisticated image for Fort Worth. Boosters wanted to use the popular parody to draw attention to their city. In the opening scene, Fort Worth citizens and visitors gather outside the Texas Spring Palace singing:

We're Fort Worth people true,  
And our city is a beauty;  
Our best we always do  
Because it is our duty.<sup>27</sup>

Fort Worth boosters did not intend their parody to simply entertain. They filled the piece with boosterism propaganda, and the purpose of the play was obvious from scene one. Edward Smith, author of both Gilbert and Sullivan parodies, portrayed Fort Worth's citizens as dutiful and honorable, a trait not always associated with Wild West towns. Smith repeated these themes throughout the play by repeating the lines above and by echoing similar themes in individual characters' dialogue and songs. Booster literature from the period often idealized race relations

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<sup>27</sup> Edward J. Smith, *A Parody of the H.M.S. Pinafore* (Fort Worth: Texas Spring Palace, 1889), Local History Collection, Fort Worth Public Library, Fort Worth, 3.

or diversity within the community and focused on the “leading” citizens of a city.<sup>28</sup> Smith used precisely this approach in his version of the *H.M.S. Pinafore* by portraying the businessmen and civic leaders as leading citizens, and by placing the cowboy, Dick Badegg, and Little Chilitop, the Mexican Tamale woman, on the periphery while also softening attitudes toward these characters. The audience was asked to focus on Bigbug and Longhorn. These were the type of men who were creating a modern, dynamic Fort Worth.

As boosterism propaganda, the play focused on two important themes: life in Fort Worth and the people of Fort Worth. Both aspects of society provided potential settlers with a wealth of information about their prospective home. Understanding the people, customs, attitude, culture, and atmosphere of a potential home would ease settlers’ minds considerably. Such knowledge would lessen the nervousness and mystery of moving. Granted, Smith sugarcoated racial and societal interaction in the play, but the parody did provide a glimpse into life in Fort Worth in the late nineteenth century, albeit idealized.

Smith returned to the honor and duty theme presented in the opening scene with the introduction of wealthy, powerful Colonel Longhorn, K.C.B. The Colonel sings his life story and describes his rise from lowly cowpoke to King of the Cowboys. Colonel Longhorn reveals that as a young man he worked as a cowboy “rounding up cattle in the good old style,” and with his affinity for the work he moved up to “roping and branding steers.”<sup>29</sup> Longhorn did not stop there, however. When offered a partnership in the ranch and given his own herd, he again proved he was born to raise cattle, and Longhorn bought out his partners. By this time Longhorn had become “a Colonel and a high-toned gent...[and there was] talk of running him for President.”<sup>30</sup> Colonel Longhorn's story illustrates one of the most important themes in Texas boosterism campaigns during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Texas was a land of opportunity. Longhorn went on to emphasize the point at the end of his song when he

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<sup>28</sup> Gruen, “The Urban Wonders”, 12-14.

<sup>29</sup> *A Parody of the H.M.S. Pinafore*, 10.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

encourages hardworking, eager individuals to settle in Texas where they can also be "owners of a big prairie."<sup>31</sup> Smith and Fort Worth boosters marketed Texas as a place where any hardworking individual could make something of himself, a theme often repeated in state booster literature and Fort Worth's local paper.

Smith's propagandizing targeted potential settlers in two ways. The Fort Worth booster sings the praises of Texas through Longhorn's story. He represents Texas as a place where a man can pull himself up by the bootstraps; anyone willing to work hard can realize his dreams. Such an approach to boosterism is expected, but Smith also appealed to settlers' sense of self. Not only was Texas a great place to live and full of opportunities, but Smith also argued that you would be foolish not to come to Texas.<sup>32</sup> This was strong language coming from a western town that many people imagined riddled with gun toting cowboys and longhorn cattle. However, the Fort Worth *H.M.S. Pinafore* booster literature sought to shatter such exaggerated and outdated images of what today civic boosters market as Cowtown. How times have changed!

In order to change Fort Worth's stereotypical image, Smith emphasized how safe the city was. Colonel Longhorn explains that he never carries a pistol in town.<sup>33</sup> Dick Badegg, the cowboy, laments that he is the last of the old cowboys in town,<sup>34</sup> and Colonel Longhorn credits Fort Worth's "fine police force...[as] the bulwark of a city's greatness."<sup>35</sup> Each allusion highlighted the safeness of Fort Worth, and the allusions chipped away at the city's Western frontier image. State booster propaganda, like *Texas the Home for the Emigrant from Everywhere*, also emphasized the safeness and lawfulness of Texas. Rather than gun-slinging cowboys strolling the saloon lined streets or regular Indian raids, capable policemen patrolled the avenues protecting Fort Worth's honorable citizens. Smith takes particular aim at proving

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 10.

that Fort Worth is a suitable environment for a lady. Early in the play, the citizens of Fort Worth sing of “Welcomes[ing] ladies so politely,”<sup>36</sup> and again, near the end of the play, Colonel Longhorn is shocked by Captain Bigbug’s language, saying that foul language is a rarity in Fort Worth. Any American could picture herself living in such a wholesome environment.

Creating a safe city was important when “selling” a city to potential settlers, but it was only one element in the western urban booster formula. Cities like Fort Worth also needed to present strong economic and cultural environments to prospective citizens, and Smith addressed Fort Worth’s economy when the chorus sang:

He should put his money in Texas sile,  
And soon he’d have a goodly pile;  
And the best investments on the earth  
Are in the “Palace City” -yes, the  
great Fort Worth.<sup>37</sup>

Smith did not beat around the bush. The *H.M.S. Pinafore* parody made the Fort Worth boosters’ message crystal clear. Fort Worth was the place to live; it had everything from the right people, to economic opportunities, to safe streets.

While the *H.M.S. Pinafore* parody ran during the Spring Palace exhibition, Fort Worth’s boosters also published propaganda to arouse interest in the inaugural run of the Texas Spring Palace. These pieces allowed boosters to promote Fort Worth using the same themes that appeared in the *H.M.S. Pinafore* and to advertise the upcoming exhibition. Among this literature is a short story, “The Romance of Fort Worth”, an ingenious piece of boosterism thinly disguised by an overlaying plot. “The Romance of Fort Worth” is pure booster propaganda and read as such offers an inspiring look at Fort Worth. The story connects only peripherally with the Texas Spring Palace; a preview of the exhibition is included at the end of the story. The protagonist of “The Romance of Fort Worth” is the city itself. The purpose of the story is selling the city of Fort Worth. Civic leaders used the story to paint flattering pictures of their town and to manipulate the outside public’s impression of Fort Worth.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 12.

The story begins with a prologue that outlines Fort Worth's early history as a military post along the western frontier, as a new city, and as a railroad town providing access to the big cities back east and to the growing towns of West Texas. This brief history lesson establishes Fort Worth as the premier real estate in Texas. The reader learns Army Major Ripley Arnold believed the area where Fort Worth sits to be "the place of all other most desirable for a military post."<sup>38</sup> Arnold's historical successors react similarly to finding Fort Worth. The "Father of Fort Worth," John Peter Smith, also exclaimed that the area was a perfect spot for a city, and local business leader and Texas Spring Palace supporter, B.B. Paddock, was equally taken with Fort Worth naming it as a perfect sight for a railroad center.<sup>39</sup> After reading nothing more than the prologue, the reader is left with no doubt that Fort Worth is an ideal Texas town! The story opens with the Russell family arriving by train from New York state. Mr. Russell is looking to invest and is considering businesses in Fort Worth, however he is skeptical about Fort Worth and Texas. Mrs. Russell, described as "refined and elegant,"<sup>40</sup> is meant to seem out of place to a reader unfamiliar with late nineteenth-century Fort Worth, and her subsequent enthusiasm for the town proves to readers that Fort Worth is sophisticated and cultured enough to satisfy eastern social elites. Mr. Russell expected to find a small, backwards cattle town, not a thriving modern city, and he is surprised by the size and quality of the buildings he sees, as well as city's infrastructure. The paved roads, streetcars, and modern fire department are each described with painstaking detail.<sup>41</sup> The author leaves no physical element of Fort Worth to the reader's imagination. He paints a careful, precise picture of the town. The story reads more like an informational brochure than a work of fiction, but this is the information that boosters wanted the public to know about Fort Worth. If a family such as the Russells could fall in love with Fort Worth, then so could every reader of "The Romance of Fort Worth." The teenage son is

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<sup>38</sup> "A Romance of Fort Worth," (Fort Worth: The Texas Spring Palace, 1889), Local History Collection Fort Worth Public Library, Fort Worth, 27.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.

captivated by Fort Worth and sets off to learn all he can about the town. His curiosity provides the reader with numerous statistics about Fort Worth as he interviews everyone he meets about the city's streets, businesses, population, banks, and more.<sup>42</sup> The son quickly falls under Fort Worth's spell, and he is eventually able to convince his father to invest in her, too. Mother and the sisters are equally intrigued by Fort Worth's cultural offerings including an opera house and library, but it is the young gentlemen whom the two daughters meet that sway their votes in favor of settling permanently in Texas.

"The Romance of Fort Worth" includes a brief description of the Texas Spring Palace and its purpose at the end of the story, and the karporama is mentioned several times in the story. The love story was written to draw attention to Texas and Fort Worth in the lead up to the Spring Palace run; the story is like a modern day movie trailer, stirring up excitement months before the opening date of the film. The story and Spring Palace preview provided people beyond Texas with a look at the exposition's host city, but it also set the stage for the themes the boosters focused on in the *H.M.S. Pinafore* parody: safety, permanence, and sophistication. Mr. Russell and his son are awed by Fort Worth's infrastructure and business, while Mrs. Russell and her daughters are taken with the city's cultural offerings, strict morality, and gallant gentlemen. By getting these images of Fort Worth to potential immigrants and visitors, boosters were able to solidify their new cosmopolitan version of Fort Worth during the Spring Palace exhibition.

In 1890 the impact and success of the Texas Spring Palace was evident when mapmakers included the Spring Palace in a map of Fort Worth, despite the fact that the year before, during a ball marking the close of its second annual run, a fire destroyed the structure. Presumably cartographers normally strove for accuracy in mapmaking, but in this case, the sheer recognizability of the Spring Palace led to its inclusion, in spite of the fact that nothing remained of the structure. Undoubtedly the impact the Spring Palace made on the growth and economy of Fort Worth and Texas meant that civic boosters wanted to continue to build off the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 32.

exhibition's success, which marked a turning point in Fort Worth boosterism. By the 1890s, Fort Worth was a railroad hub and a growing urban center. With Paddock's and other local boosters' vision and leadership, Fort Worth ended the nineteenth century with a modern, cosmopolitan image. Through booster campaigns such as the Texas Spring Palace and municipal improvements, like street paving and public transportation, and by using the local paper to disseminate booster propaganda, Fort Worth achieved recognition as a modern, cosmopolitan city that could compete with both Dallas and any other western city. However, the Texas Spring Palace and the turn of the century did not mark the end of Fort Worth boosterism, rather the twentieth century ushered in a new round of civic promotion.

Amon Carter took up the boosterism mantle after Paddock, and although the two shared similar goals for their adopted home towns, such as placing Fort Worth in the national spotlight and securing new economic development for the city, Carter approached these goals very differently. Carter was a self-made man who had left home at 11 and supported himself by working odd jobs, selling chicken sandwiches to train passengers, and countless other schemes during his youth and early adulthood.<sup>43</sup> Among Carter's most important business deals was starting a new evening paper in Fort Worth in 1906. Although Carter did not have money to invest, he knew men who did, and was able to come on board the new Fort Worth *Star* as its advertising department. Within a few years Carter helped orchestrate a buyout of the *Star's* main competition, the *Telegram*. From that point on Carter was the drive behind the paper. He was instrumental in increasing its circulation to one of the nation's largest and for making it Fort Worth's and West Texas' main news source for years. The *Star-Telegram* gave Carter a pulpit from which he could promote Fort Worth and West Texas. The paper became one of his chief booster tools, like Paddock's *Democrat*, and Carter's mission for the *Star-Telegram* was to "sell, promote and build the city and region." In so doing Carter argued the paper would grow, too.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Jerry Flemmons, *Amon The Life of Amon Carter, Sr. of Texas* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1978), 112-117.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

Carter was a larger than life figure, and he used himself as a booster tool as much as he did the paper. He dressed in cowboy boots and hat and spoke with an exaggerated Texas drawl, and his impact on Fort Worth was significant.<sup>45</sup> He became the public face of Fort Worth. His biographer, Jerry Flemmons, wrote that Carter was the story of Fort Worth in the first half of the twentieth century, “hustling this and that event into national exposure.”<sup>46</sup> Carter entertained politicians, celebrities, and businessmen at his Fort Worth home and around the country. He was notorious for giving away Stetsons, part of his Fort Worth boosterism.<sup>47</sup> He did draw attention to Fort Worth, but the contrast with Paddocks’ methods of attracting attention is worth noting. In the late nineteenth century, Paddock worked to create a modern city without any vestiges of the Wild West. But within the first few decades of the twentieth century, Carter used Fort Worth’s western heritage as a selling point. Carter sold an image of himself and Fort Worth, which he nicknamed “Where the West Begins”, as western, a haven for cowboys. Carter tried to conjure up the mythical, Hollywood version of the West. The contrast between the two men’s idea of what image would best promote Fort Worth is a testament to changing times. Carter’s twentieth century Fort Worth, where the West begins, would not have worked in Paddock’s post-Civil War Texas, yet Carter saw the need to reinvent Fort Worth again in the new century.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 231.

## CHAPTER 4

### BIG D AND THE STATE FAIR OF TEXAS

Best known today for football and the iconic 1980s soap opera that shared its name, Dallas underwent the same growing pains as Fort Worth following the Civil War. Dallas leaders wanted to encourage growth by portraying Dallas as a modern, thriving, and cosmopolitan city. To turn Dallas into an integral part of the emerging urban west, civic and business leaders focused on three growth factors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: railroads, civic promotion, and civic improvements. Fort Worth leaders used these same elements to define their city during the period, but because Dallas tied itself to the cotton agriculture in East Texas rather than the cattle ranching to the west as Fort Worth did, the two North Texas neighbors developed simultaneously and independently but with same goals – to create a thriving modern metropolis on what had been the Texas frontier just a few years earlier. Both cities fought hard for railroad access in the 1870s and 1880s, used major exhibitions to promote their cities, and enacted civic improvements as a means of creating modern cities. Fort Worth launched the Spring Palace exhibition and undertook numerous civic improvements to prepare the city for the inaugural Spring Palace run. Dallas built gradual support for its annual fair and commissioned a massive city plan that encompassed everything from road plans to a Trinity River levee system to municipal park space which when completed would give Dallas both the layout of a modern city and the air of permanence that nineteenth century western cities strove to establish.

During its early years, Dallas, founded by John Neely Bryan in 1842 along the Trinity River, was threatened by Indian raids until the military fort at Fort Worth was established in 1849.

Periodic flooding along the Trinity River also posed a threat for many years.<sup>1</sup> Although Dallas remained fairly small until after the Civil War, it became a business and trading center for the local farming communities and a stopping point for travelers passing through North Texas. Houston and Shreveport were the nearest major economic centers to Dallas and both were over 200 miles away; such distances left Dallas primed to become a major commercial center in North Texas.<sup>2</sup> Dallas grew modestly during the antebellum period and immediately following the Civil War, but once local civic leaders secured the railroad in 1872, Dallas began to grow more rapidly. With the help of civic leaders like Captain W.H. Gaston, Dallas enticed two railroads to come through town by 1873. By providing financial incentives to the Texas and Pacific line and by convincing state legislators to write into a bill that Dallas would be a stop on the Houston and Texas Central line, Dallas leaders turned the city into a major railroad crossroads. Just as it did in countless other cities, the arrival of rail lines spurred population and economic growth in Dallas and sparked a new period of local promotion and boosterism by Dallas' business elite.

The new period of local boosterism was highlighted by urban development. Local boosters published propaganda to showoff their corner of the newly urbanized West. Two businessmen, banker W.H. Gaston and newspaper editor George Dealey, led the urban booster movement in late nineteenth century Dallas. Gaston was instrumental in bringing the railroad to Dallas and was described by The *Dallas Morning News* as "responsible for the little river town of 1870 being the metropolis of the Southwest."<sup>3</sup> And Gaston was indeed an important figure in bringing railroads to Dallas by donating land for a right of way to the Texas and Pacific and by donating land for a railroad depot in town.<sup>4</sup> With the arrival of the railroad the booster efforts of

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Acheson, *Dallas Yesterday* (Dallas: SMU Press, 1977), xvi.

<sup>2</sup> John Henry Brown, *History of Dallas County, Texas: from 1837 to 1887* (Dallas: Milligan, Cornett and Farnham Printers, 1887), Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Digital Libraries Project, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/permalink/meta-pt-14390>, 16-19.

<sup>3</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, "Captain W.H. Gaston Pioneer in Dallas", December 12, 1915, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Acheson, 37.

Gaston and other civic leaders shifted gears; promotion and boosterism began portraying Dallas as a new modern city, without ties to the Confederate South, and ready to welcome new comers to a vibrant, growing city. City boosters advocated civic improvements and produced pro-Dallas propaganda all aimed at selling Dallas as a modern, established, and cosmopolitan city. To this end Dallas boosters tried to develop the Texas State Fair into an annual Dallas event that would draw both state and national attention. Gaston immersed himself in the effort to create a state fair in Dallas, working with the fair from its inception in 1886 to 1915. While Dallas leaders and boosters worked years to create a sustainable and economically viable annual fair, that quest was not the sole promotional scheme at work in Dallas.

The local newspaper, *The Dallas Morning News*, served as a major promotional tool in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, just as *The Democrat* and its subsequent incarnations were in Fort Worth. George B. Dealey, long-time editor of the *Dallas Morning News*, also acted as a tireless advocate for Dallas. Dealey moved from Galveston, where he had worked for the *Morning News's* parent paper, to Dallas when the *Morning News* began its run in 1885, and from the beginning Dealey used the *Morning News* to promote Dallas, just as Paddock used the *Democrat* in Fort Worth. The *Morning News* ran articles proclaiming the progress in Texas and Dallas and predicting that it would soon be filled with investors and capitalists.<sup>5</sup> With a public forum such as the *Morning News*, Dealey was in a position to sway public opinion to support civic improvements and local booster programs. Dealey stayed active in civic organizations like the Citizens Association of Dallas that promoted city improvements, and Dealey used the *Morning News* to generate public support for improvement and booster plans for the city.<sup>6</sup> Like Paddock in Fort Worth, both Gaston and Dealey, used their positions in the community to make their city preeminent in the West.

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<sup>5</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, "State Immigration Movement," April 28, 1888, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Michael V. Hazel, ed., *Dallas Reconsidered: Essays in Local History* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 1995), 52.

A turning point in Dallas' growth came just after the turn of the twentieth century with the formation of the Citizens Association of Dallas, a group of conservative business leaders who overhauled city government under a new charter calling for a mayor and city commissioners instead of the former city aldermen.<sup>7</sup> The group ushered in an era of city promotion and planning that coincided with a national movement to service oriented city government which was highlighted by landscape architect, George Kessler's, Kessler Plan for Dallas in 1911. The Citizens Association, worked to push through city improvements and promote local business, which again marked a shift toward service oriented government that began emerging in urban centers across the country. A local history and promotional book published in 1909 and written by one of city's leading businessmen, Phillip Lindsley, referred to the group's "enthusiasm for city affairs never seen before", and further describe the Citizens Association as working "faithfully, unceasingly and successfully for the lasting good of Dallas...as well as [the] future welfare of the city."<sup>8</sup>

The Kessler Plan outlined a series of specific, detailed improvements Dallas should make to ease its growing pains and create a more cohesive, usable, and modern city. George Kessler, a well known city planner from St. Louis at the turn of the twentieth century, was hired by the Texas State Fair in 1904 to lay out the fair grounds. According to the introduction to *A City Plan for Dallas*, Kessler's work was a "success and practical object lesson of much value to the people of Dallas of the importance of planning and laying out public improvements in a systematic manner." Civic and business leaders moved to address Dallas' haphazard city plan by organizing the City Plan and Development league of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce in 1910. Led by *Dallas Morning News* editor George B. Dealey among others, the group worked to garner public support for city improvements, which led the city to hire Kessler to create an urban

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Fairbanks, *For the City as a Whole: Planning, Politics, and the Public Interest in Dallas, Texas, 1900-1965* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 18-21.

<sup>8</sup> Phillip Lindsley, *A History of Greater Dallas and Vicinity Volume 1* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1909), Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Digital Libraries Project, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/permalink/meta-ptb-21072>, 310-311.

plan for Dallas.<sup>9</sup> Kessler produced a city plan for Dallas that included sweeping changes. Kessler reported that changes were necessary to transform Dallas from a village, established without giving thought to the “needs of the increasing population”, into a great city that took “future extensions” into consideration.<sup>10</sup> The lack of planning Kessler referred to resulted, at least in part, because of a series of annexations Dallas made beginning in the 1880s. Dallas annexed several smaller surrounding communities including East Dallas, Oaklawn, and Oak Cliff near the turn of the century, and each community came with its own city layout already in place. Adapting to these types of additions, population growth, and the need to modernize city systems, had left Dallas in need of a clear, cohesive, centralized urban plan. Kessler’s city plan for Dallas aimed to relieve these problems and provide Dallas with path to follow for more organized, logical city growth that would also modernize the existing city layout and help Dallas better serve its growing population and economic base.

Kessler’s plan included building levees to prevent flooding from the Trinity River, which had been an ongoing problem for Dallas since its founding. Removing the threat of flooding was important to the central business district and further growth. Redirecting rail lines around rather than through the city center was one of Kessler’s more radical ideas, but in order to create a better functioning city center, Kessler believed that moving rail lines outside the center of town would ease congestion. He also recommended creating a modern passenger train station and plaza in downtown as a “fitting railroad entrance to Dallas”. Furthermore Kessler proposed expanding and extending many existing streets, which he believed would alleviate “all of the troubles and inconveniences of lack of continuity, narrow streets, long blocks and other difficulties” which were the product of an “unfortunate street layout.”<sup>11</sup> Kessler also encouraged the city to make better use of existing city park land. The plan Kessler developed was his long

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<sup>9</sup> George Kessler, *A City Plan for Dallas* (Dallas: Report of Park Board, 1913), Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division Dallas Public Library, Dallas, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-13.

term vision for Dallas; he envisioned the city moving gradually toward the finished product, and Kessler advised that “once a beginning is made other improvements will follow naturally and easily.” The plan met with popular support, and Dallas began making the changes Kessler laid out in the plan.<sup>12</sup> Again, by commissioning Kessler’s plan, Dallas’ leaders embraced the idea of a modern, cosmopolitan city designed to make living and working in Dallas easy and enjoyable.

As Dallas promoters used civic improvements to modernize and beautify the city, they also developed events to lure visitors and new residents to Dallas and North Texas. The most notable example of these endeavors was the State Fair of Texas. Although the fair’s beginnings were humble, it eventually grew into a major annual event for Dallas that continues to draw thousands to the city each year. While Fort Worth put on the Texas Spring Palace, Dallas similarly held local fairs to attract attention for the city. Dallas promoters made various attempts to hold fairs from 1859 to the 1870s. The first fair, in 1859, garnered attention from the *Dallas Herald*, which recognized that the fair provided an obvious way to promote the city. Local businessman and historian, Phillip Lindsley remarked in his 1909 history of Dallas that, “Dallas had a forecast of what a great factor a fair was to be in her future growth.”<sup>13</sup> However, despite this enthusiasm, these fairs met with limited success in becoming a sustained boosterism strategy. Though annual attendance ranged from 2000 in 1859 to 30,000 in 1877, no serious attempt was made to establish an annual exposition in Dallas until the mid 1880s.<sup>14</sup>

In 1886, two separate groups held “state fairs” in Dallas during the fall. The Dallas State Fair and Exposition, the bigger of the two fairs had the backing of local boosters like Gaston and its board included representatives from across the state. The grand opening ballyhooed a colorful fair with parade participants ranging from the mayors of Dallas and East Dallas, mounted police, a Mexican Band, and a bicycle club. They also included a group of Comanche Indians to

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>13</sup> Lindsley, 60.

<sup>14</sup> Nancy Wiley, *The Great State Fair of Texas an Illustrated History* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1985), 4.

highlight for visitors that Texas had civilized the frontier; Indians had become entertainment for urbanites rather than a threat to frontier settlers. The fair itself centered around a horse racing track and large exhibition hall. The Dallas State Fair also arranged to extend the Texas and Pacific railroad to the fair grounds, as well as the Main Street car line, but the Dallas State Fair and Exposition still ended its run \$100,000 in debt.<sup>15</sup> Held that same fall, the Texas State Fair had similar plans to attract visitors to Dallas. Its exhibits included Lady de Janette, a “world famous exhibition horse,” a tribe of Seneca and Modoc Indians, and “the only Indian brass band ever on exhibition,” but the Texas State Fair had scheduled a shorter run and suffered from lower attendance than its rival.<sup>16</sup> After both fairs ended it was clear that Dallas could not support two rival fairs, and talk quickly turned to a merger. By early 1887, the two sides agreed to merge into the Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition which marked the beginning of the modern state fair that still runs annually each fall in Dallas.<sup>17</sup>

The 1887 debut of the Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition received support from local promoters and papers and came at a time when Texas saw a lot of growth. The fair gave Dallas a way to advertise itself and take advantage of the growth, but it would be years before the State Fair really put Dallas on the map. The *Dallas News* called the fair “a magnificent factor” in promoting Dallas and the area surrounding it and hyped the upcoming fair throughout the year. Anticipation for the 1887 State Fair ran high as city promoters predicted that the hotels, restaurants, and shops would be bursting with visitors. The *Dallas News* again praised the fair by saying that it was responsible for “opening out more avenues and streets in three months than had been done in six years.” The paper continued to expound the virtues of the fair and to cajole the people of Dallas into supporting it monetarily: “Fairs are for the common good of all. They are of measureless benefit to the entire city, and the entire city should contribute to

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<sup>15</sup> “Dallas State Fair”, *Dallas Morning News*, Various articles with fair updates, Dallas Morning News Online Archive, May 5, 1886 – October 26, 1886.

<sup>16</sup> “Texas State Fair”, *Dallas Morning News*, Dallas Morning News Online Archives, October 10, 1886.

<sup>17</sup> Wiley, 3-13.

sustain them.” Although the citizens of Dallas were not as quick as the *Dallas News* to see the necessity of the fair, the Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition did eventually garner support, as the paper noted.<sup>18</sup> Subsequent fairs increased in size and drew more people to Dallas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fair grounds were also permanently established and the area eventually became a city park. Though the fair was still plagued with financial problems, Dallas’ promoters and citizens managed to hold the fair annually. After ending several runs in the red, by 1893 the Fair turned a profit, and the financial outlook began to brighten. At the turn of the twentieth century, the fair was solidly established in Dallas.<sup>19</sup>

Hosting the annual and increasingly popular fair helped Dallas solidify its urban identity and provides a contrast to Fort Worth’s two run Spring Palace exhibition. The Spring Palace garnered substantial short term attention for Fort Worth and without question helped to craft a more modern and cosmopolitan image for Fort Worth, but Dallas’ annual commitment to the state fair regularly brought visitors to the city and gave Dallas the opportunity to show off its growth.

Though the annual fair continued, Dallas seized the opportunity to host a one-time exhibition in 1936, the one-hundredth anniversary of Texas’ independence. Serious talk of a centennial exposition began at a 1923 meeting of the Advertising Clubs of Texas in Corsicana. After a presentation on “What Texas Has to Advertise, and How to Advertise It” the discussion turned to using the Texas centennial to promote Texas. Texas’ major cities vied for the right to hold the main celebration.<sup>20</sup> In the end, Dallas was selected to host the centennial celebration over sites like San Antonio, home of the Alamo, and Houston, where the Battle of San Jacinto was fought during the Texas Revolution. Although Dallas did not have an obvious historical claim to the centennial, Dallas businessman and promoter Robert L. Thornton, with the mayor’s

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<sup>18</sup> “The Coming State Fair”, *Dallas Morning News*, Dallas Morning News Online Archives, April 17, 1887, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Wiley, 24-30.

<sup>20</sup> *Texas Under Six Flags*, Centennial Exposition collection, Dallas Historical Society, G. B. Dealey Library archives, Box 154, 1.

and Chamber of Commerce's support, launched a bid to bring the centennial exposition to town. Ultimately the offer of Dallas' Fair Park as a site for the fair, a plan to pass city bonds to help with financing, and Thornton's pledge that the centennial would go on whether or not Dallas received state and federal funds to help offset costs won over the state centennial committee, and Dallas was named as the site for the centennial exposition. With the announcement, Dallas leaders had finally secured a lock on the State Fair and a national stage on which to showcase Dallas.<sup>21</sup> Dallas had also cemented its "can do" image by pledging to carry on with or without outside help. This "can do" spirit represented a blending of frontier fortitude and eastern business acumen.

Organizers predicted millions would visit Dallas during the run of the Centennial Exposition and provide an economic boom for the city, but initially backers took a risk by promising to deliver a multi-million dollar bond package and centennial celebration with or without government funding. The gamble paid off. Dallas had laid claim to the State Fair early on, and they did not want to lose the centennial exposition which might then weaken their claim to the state fair. Dallas voters approved a \$3.5 million bond package for State Fair Park improvements, water and sewage system upgrades, and numerous other expenses connected to the exposition. After the vote, city leaders referred to the people of Dallas as stockholders in the Centennial Exposition and charged them with helping to advertise the fair and welcome visitors to the city, a role the citizens embraced as excitement about the exposition increased. Dallas did receive an additional \$3 million from the state and federal governments, and with the additional money, passage of the bond package, and public support for the centennial celebration, Dallas had good reason to believe the exposition would be a success. By the mid-1920s, daily State Fair attendance averaged over 50,000 people, and the Centennial Exposition was to be a much larger and longer running affair.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Darwin Payne, *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity in the Twentieth Century* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 1994), 159-166.

<sup>22</sup> "Texas Centennial Exposition", Publicity pamphlet, Centennial Exposition Collection, Dallas Historical Society, G.B. Dealey Library archives, Box 19, 1-2.

Following two years of planning the Texas Centennial Exposition opened to great anticipation in June 1936. Massive publicity campaigns by the state, Dallas businesses, and railroad companies had primed Texas and the country for the exposition, and the Centennial Exposition's own publicity department fielded countless individual requests for centennial information while also publishing its own brochures, broadsides, pamphlets, automobile stickers, and posters to promote interest in the extravaganza. Just as the Texas Spring Palace promoters had done fifty years earlier, Centennial publicists sent out exposition literature to travel agents and organizations nation wide. They also utilized radio, the mass communication of the day, as a way of stirring up excitement about the Texas centennial. Brochures entreated visitors to experience Texas history and discover the "industrial and economic rise of an empire in the Southwest". Brochures explained that Texas was more than "cattle and cowboys roaming vast brown plains, or Texas Rangers, or boom towns and oil fields," Texas, they claimed, played a major part in national life, and the Centennial Exposition was the best way to discover the real Texas--its cities, universities, factories, and colorful history.<sup>23</sup> This literature also advertised Dallas. It touted the city's business district, shopping, hotels, trolley system, and "wide smooth thoroughfares, assuring swift transit of traffic." These advertisements also noted how easy it was to reach Dallas by car or bus via highways, by airplane, or by train.<sup>24</sup>

The Publicity Department also published fact lists to keep Dallas citizens informed about the upcoming exposition: updates on Centennial Park, job openings, and information about planned exhibits. These publications reminded the people of Dallas that the Centennial Exposition "was a civic undertaking" and that they had "pledged their money and man power" to help make it successful; Dallas' citizens should think of themselves as living advertisements for

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<sup>23</sup> "Texas a Great State a Great Exposition," Santa Fe Railroad brochure, Centennial Exposition collection, Dallas Historical Society, G. B. Dealey Library archives, Box 19.

<sup>24</sup> "Texas Centennial Exposition," Centennial Publicity Department pamphlet, Centennial Exposition collection, Dallas Historical Society, G. B. Dealey Library archives, Box 21.

the exposition and spread the word across Texas and the country.<sup>25</sup> To help with publicity, the Centennial organizers solicited poems, songs, and pageant ideas about Texas, Dallas, and the centennial from people around the state. The Centennial commission created by the state legislature issued a pamphlet asking Texans to, “Think–Talk--Write... Texas Centennial in 1936. It’s your State. It’s your celebration!”, as a means of asking for ideas to help publicize the upcoming Centennial Exposition or for entertainment during the fair.<sup>26</sup> Response to the request was huge, and the pieces sent in to the centennial organizers ranged from published songs to hand written poems and tunes from around the state and country.

Much as the Texas Spring Palace literature had touted the opportunities Texas and Fort Worth had to offer, this new booster literature romanticized Texas history and highlighted Texas’ and Dallas’ industry, culture, and universities. It focused on the modern life style the people of Dallas and other Texas cities lived juxtaposed with the cattle and cowboy era people associated with Texas. One song, “Sunny Texas”, spoke of Texas industry and how it outshone competitors. The lyrics also told of Texas being a land of plenty and happiness. These lyrics portrayed Dallas as a thriving business center despite the depression still gripping the country in 1936, and that was the image Dallas’ leaders wanted visitors to have when they arrived in town. Other literature proclaimed that a Texan’s biggest problem was “trying not to keep from making all the money in world,” another statement clearly aimed at the economic problems of the 1930s. The same poem continued by borrowing a tactic used in the Spring Palace literature; it emphasized Texas’ size, claiming it had enough land for “every man, women, and child.”<sup>27</sup>

Official Exposition publicity used similar propaganda to create interest in Texas and the Centennial Exposition. A publication from June 1936, mentioned the “incalculable natural

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<sup>25</sup> “Facts for Every Dallas Citizen Should Know,” Centennial Publicity Department pamphlet, Centennial Exposition collection, Dallas Historical Society, G. B. Dealey Library archives, Box 21.

<sup>26</sup> *Texas Under Six Flags*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> “Sunny Texas” and “What Our Traveling Men Hear in Texas,” Song and poem sent in to Centennial Publicity Department, Centennial Exposition collection, Dallas Historical Society, G. B. Dealey Library archives, Box 154.

resources of the Lone Star State,” and its thousands of acres ready to be farmed, as well as the state’s booming cattle and cotton businesses. Again, these messages were very similar to the Spring Palace booster literature, but the Exposition pamphlet also highlighted the Texas oil industry and noted the state’s wealth and prosperity would be exhibited at the Texas Centennial Exposition. While the message of the centennial booster literature echoed the Spring Palace literature through its flattering descriptions of Texas and Dallas, it also pointedly addressed the economic problems of the Great Depression by portraying Texas as a happy, prosperous land of plenty.

The Centennial Exposition was designed like a World’s Fair, so its scope and size were significantly grander than Dallas’ previous State Fairs. The grounds included more than fifty exhibit halls ranging from a Hall of Electricity, livestock building, Petroleum exhibits, Agriculture Hall, a Domestic Arts building, performance areas, a midway, historical exhibits in the Hall of State, and much more. The fair grounds were transformed by adding a collection of art deco buildings that housed the main exhibits. One of the most popular attractions was the Cavalcade of Texas, a pageant dramatizing the history of Texas. Performed on a nearly block long stage by over 300 actors, the show was written by a Dallas native and was part drama, part musical, and part spectacle. It chronicled Texas history from the Spanish period to the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> The range of exhibits and intense publicity campaigns leading up to the Centennial prove that this was not merely another state fair but was instead aimed at a national audience that Dallas promoters had courted with only limited success previously. The Centennial celebrations provided the backdrop to showcase Dallas’ updated and cosmopolitan image coupled with its strong economic base.

Following nearly two years of preparation, the Texas Centennial Exposition welcomed its first guests in June 1936. Dallas proved itself ready to host the extravaganza as it opened to rave reviews. The opening parade drew between 250,000 and half a million spectators to

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<sup>28</sup> “Cavalcade of Texas,” Centennial Publicity Department pamphlet, Centennial Exposition collection, Dallas Historical Society, G. B. Dealey Library archives, Box 67, 1-3.

downtown Dallas, which the *Dallas News* described as a “solid mass of humanity” and the biggest crowd ever gathered in Dallas. With such massive attendance came pressure on Dallas to prove it was ready to act as host of the exposition. The *Dallas News* ran a message from the Chamber of Commerce asking every Dallas citizen to continue the role of ambassador for the city, saying that visitors’ most lasting memories of the Centennial Exposition would be of Dallas and its people. If citizens came across as brusque or hurried, visitors could take that impression of Dallas home and perpetuate it for a generation or more. Citizens were reminded that they were “stockholders in the exposition to the extent that they [we] voted for bonds” to finance the Centennial Exposition.<sup>29</sup>

When Centennial Exposition plans gained momentum in Dallas, Fort Worth’s chief booster, Amon Carter, began laying the groundwork for a rival centennial celebration in Fort Worth. Although Fort Worth had not vied to host the central centennial celebration, Carter wanted Fort Worth to share the spotlight. He conceived of a tribute to West Texas and the “historical and industrial importance of the livestock industry” to the state.<sup>30</sup> Fort Worth was granted \$250,000 coupled with a Public Works Administration loan-grant to help fund the exposition, but Fort Worth, like Dallas, also had to pass bond issues to insure adequate funding. Once the bonds passed and a lengthy debate over where to locate the exposition was resolved, Fort Worth’s boosters were left with only a few months to put together the Frontier Centennial Exposition.<sup>31</sup> The initial ideas for the exposition centered around Fort Worth’s annual stock show, but Carter quickly expanded the original plan to include a bigger stock show, a midway, Broadway show, musical revue, and replica western town.

The rivalry between Dallas and Fort Worth clearly played a role in Fort Worth’s decision to host a centennial celebration. But the organizers decision to focus the Fort Worth exposition

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<sup>29</sup> “Half a Million Jam City Streets as Huge Parade Opens Centennial,” *Dallas Morning News*, Dallas Morning News Online Archive, June 7, 1936, sec IV, 1.

<sup>30</sup> “Centennial Stock Show in Fort Worth,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, July 8, 1935.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth B. Ragsdale, *The Year America Discovered Texas Centennial '36* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), 209.

on the livestock industry, West Texas, and the frontier—the mythical Old West—the same image Fort Worth had fought to dispel in the late nineteenth century became the heart of its centennial celebration. Fort Worth embraced the West and the frontier, exactly the image Carter always tried to promote of Fort Worth, as a way of setting itself apart from Dallas' central centennial exposition. Fort Worth newspaper articles from 1936 are sprinkled with jabs at Dallas and its centennial exposition, and a film titled *March of Times*, which ran in the spring of 1936 to stir up interest for the statewide centennial events, touched on the rivalry between Dallas and Fort Worth. The film joked that the two cities were vying for “musical comedy supremacy in their respective centennial celebrations.” The same article also noted that once Carter hired Broadway producer Billy Rose, “things hummed in Fort Worth and hawed in Dallas.”<sup>32</sup> However, Fort Worth's emphasis on frontier Texas allowed the two fairs to offer visitors unique experiences, and the official word on the centennial rivalry was mutual admiration. In a speech at the Frontier Centennial opening, Carter wished both expositions success, and several reporters covering the opening wrote along the same lines. John Rosenfield, Jr., a *Dallas News* reporter, predicted that while the Frontier Centennial was not on the scale of a world's fair like Dallas' exposition, it could not avoid being “a potent attraction within the state and without.”<sup>33</sup> Another reporter, Max Bentley of the Associated Press, described the two shows as “so completely different as to be complementary,” again reinforcing the official line about mutual support. The underlying rivalry cannot be overlooked, and as a reminder of it, Fort Worth promoters erected a large sign directly outside the gates of Dallas' fair grounds advertising, “Wild and Whoo-pee 45 minutes west,” in an attempt to entice Dallas visitors to Fort Worth.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “March of Times Shows Humor of the Centennial Celebrations,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, June 26, 1936.

<sup>33</sup> “Frontier Show Opens,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, July 18, 1936.

<sup>34</sup> Ragsdale, 270.

Fort Worth's "Wild and Whoo-pee" evolved from the stock show to a mix of Broadway and the Old West.<sup>35</sup> The Fort Worth Frontier Centennial opened in July with musical shows, an Old West town, historical exhibits, and a midway; an enlarged stock show opened as a second phase of the exposition in the fall. Billy Rose, the New York producer hired to plan the shows, staged *Jumbo*, the "musicalized circus" he had popularized in New York, a musical revue at the new Casa Manana dinner-amphitheater, Sally Rand's Nude Ranch, and *The Last Frontier*, a musical-rodeo depicting life on the Texas frontier. To lend an air of authenticity to visitors' frontier experiences, the exposition also included Sunset Trail. Sunset Trail was a recreated western village that included a general store, saloon, church, hotel, and blacksmith shop all made to look old and weathered. Workers costumed as cowboys or nineteenth century pioneer women added to the frontier flavor, and a group of Indians roamed the street in buckskin and feathered headdresses to add to the "local color" of the Frontier Exposition.<sup>36</sup>

The Frontier Centennial Exposition ran from July to November with good attendance, although it never equaled Dallas' numbers. When it closed in November after a two week extension, talk immediately turned to another Frontier fair the following year; it was revived as the Frontier Fiesta during the next three summers. Although the Frontier Centennial was not a money maker for Fort Worth, city leaders credited the exposition with spotlighting Fort Worth and giving visitors a positive impression of the city, just as the Texas Spring Palace had done decades earlier.<sup>37</sup>

Dallas' Centennial Exposition was also a huge success by all accounts. It brought state and national recognition to Dallas and delivered the economic boost Thornton and promoters had hoped for. The Centennial was the "crowning achievement in all the city's years of self-promotion".<sup>38</sup> Total attendance for the exposition topped six million and sparked a 1937 revival

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<sup>35</sup> "Frontier Stock Show Opens," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Ragsdale, 295.

<sup>38</sup> Payne, 170-171.

called The Greater Texas and Pan American Exposition. The Centennial achieved what earlier Dallas boosters had hoped the State Fair would do for the city. Dallas' post-Centennial image was that of a sophisticated city which stood on its own merits. From the Centennial forward, Dallas was no longer linked to the old South or cowboys and cattle drives. The attention garnered with the Centennial Exposition and the civic improvements outlined in the Kessler Plan, Dallas reinvented itself and emerged as a modern, commercial, and cosmopolitan center. Dallas' leaders had embraced the promotional tools and urban reforms being used across the West during the period to improve urban city living and draw visitors and new residents to Dallas.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Payne, 170-171.

## CHAPTER 5

### EPILOGUE

Dallas and Fort Worth literally developed along side one another; the two cities were founded within a few years of each other and tackled the challenges of urbanization together in the post Reconstruction years and early decades of the twentieth century. Although Fort Worth never quite matched Dallas in physical size or population, it did not develop in Dallas' shadow. Early on Dallas became a cotton exchange and commerce center and later thrived when the Federal Reserve and oil business came to town. Each of these businesses anchored Dallas more to the east than west and helped define Dallas as a modern, urban business center. Fort Worth began to thrive when it became a cattle market, and it also used the new industry to begin transforming itself from a small western town to a modern, cosmopolitan city. Fort Worth, however, never completely let go of its cow town roots and recreated itself again in the early twentieth century as Cowtown, the place where the west begins. Fort Worth embraced its western start and turned a local livestock show into an annual exhibition that rivaled Dallas' annual State Fair.

The two cities developed a mostly friendly rivalry in the late nineteenth century that carried through well into the late twentieth century. The rivalry rarely turned ugly, but it underlay the character and economic differences between the cities. The rivalry was not just about which city was bigger but what each city was known for and what it had to offer. It is this aspect of the rivalry where boosterism and city promotion are most important. As Michael Hooks wrote in his article on this rivalry, "it gained momentum in the post-Civil War era as cities strove for economic, political, and social power and the prestige that accompanied[s] these goals."<sup>1</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Hooks, "The Role of Promoters in Urban Rivalry: The Dallas-Fort Worth Experience, 1870-1910," *Red River Valley Historical Review* 7 (1982), 4.

was precisely what Dallas' and Fort Worth's promoters were trying to achieve during the late nineteenth century. They strove to carve out a unique identity for their city within the framework of Western urban boosterism from the period, and fostering a rivalry with their neighbor gave them an easy way to make their city stand out.

What made the rivalry between Fort Worth and Dallas unusual was that both cities developed very equally. Because both cities secured railroads within a few years of each other, their development and expansion at the end of the nineteenth century happened at a similar rate. Although Dallas' population exceeded Fort Worth's, Fort Worth's cattle business kept pace with the cotton market in Dallas. Neither city dominated North Texas economically because each city "possessed the promoters necessary to achieve dominance in the region."<sup>2</sup> These promoters created boosterism schemes and expositions to draw attention to each city. As business leaders, politicians, and newspaper editors, these promoters were in a position to support the expositions and city improvements that might set their city apart from their neighbor.

By the 1880s, both Dallas and Fort Worth were railroad centers and both were established in the cattle or cotton market. It was during this period that Dallas made its first serious attempt at establishing an annual State Fair to promote the city. Within a few years Fort Worth held its first Texas Spring Palace exhibition; the Spring Palace was a huge success and drew thousands to Fort Worth. Fort Worth won this round of the rivalry, with the success of the Spring Palace and the numerous city improvements put into place for the exhibition; it successfully shed its cowboy image and emerged as a more modern, cosmopolitan city. However, by the early twentieth century, Dallas had overhauled its city government, commissioned the Kessler city improvement plan, and been chosen to host the Centennial Exposition in 1936. These combined triumphs gave Dallas its modern, sophisticated image and set the stage for the twentieth century. It also marked Dallas as the dominant city in North Texas, but the rivalry continued for years to come.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Dallas and Fort Worth followed similar booster agendas precisely because they developed alongside one another. Both cities used major expositions to draw attention to their cities, both benefited from state-wide boosterism programs through the state immigration office, and both ultimately engaged in major civic improvement plans to modernize their cities and help them keep pace with growing populations. The push for modernity, permanence, and cosmopolitanism by both Fort Worth and Dallas was illustrative of the broader movement toward modernism and urbanization throughout the west in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

While both cities engaged in civic improvements to achieve these goals and used statewide and national exhibitions to showcase their new images, rural boosterism also embraced similar “civilizing” goals during the period. Buckingham’s Cross S Ranch community offered settlers a tamed piece of the frontier so that they could play at farming within a safe, sanitized community with all the amenities and virtually no hardships. This was the modern version of frontier life; it was the rural equivalent of modern urban living and reflected the broader boosterism themes at work across the West. Recognizing that similar boosterism goals and approaches were applied throughout the West and more specifically across Texas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is clear that modernization and ease of living, be it through rural community amenities or service oriented municipal government, became a normal way of life in the American West. Western American life had been transformed from the harsh frontier to modern, cosmopolitan city life in just a few decades.

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