

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT IN OAK CLIFF, DALLAS, TEXAS, 1887-1939.

I. INTRODUCTION

When Oak Cliff was first established in 1887, Texas was beginning its transformation from a rural, largely agricultural society to one increasingly dependent on manufacturing and industry. Consequently, greater percentages of the state's population began to concentrate in urban areas ^{resulting in} which generated the rise of a ^{segment} middle class. As this segment of the population expanded and gained greater economic, social and political power, urban areas experienced pressure to meet growing housing demands, and a residential construction boom ensued in major cities like Dallas. This expansion ^{coupled with a price-competition} contributed to the founding of suburban developments just outside established cities, which, in turn, led to innovative real estate speculative practices, new promotional techniques and different methods of home and property financing. ^{accompanied the boom in housing} Oak Cliff, the Dallas suburb, was one such development, and its founding and settlement reflected this late 19th-century trend.

Dallas emerged from the Reconstruction period as the dominant regional center for North Texas, uniquely positioned for economic and population advancement. Railroad expansion during the 1870s left Dallas with five major rail lines, and the subsequent opening of new manufacturing concerns spurred growth in Dallas and nearby areas. Realization of the region's vast agricultural potential, as well as the growth of cotton-related industries and the opening of West Texas ranch and farm lands further aided in the city's development into a major wholesale and retail marketing center in the state.

Dallas, as a consequence, became one of Texas' largest and fastest growing cities, and new residential developments and self-governing communities, such as Oak Cliff, Cedar Springs and East Dallas, began to surround the core city by the late 19th century.

The groundwork for Oak Cliff was established with the entrepreneurship of local developers who capitalized on Oak Cliff's proximity to Dallas. Typical with other urban expansion of the late 19th century, these businessmen acquired large tracts of land just beyond the city limits and created new, quasi-independent communities. By partitioning these properties into smaller blocks and lots, ^{with smaller lots and larger profits} developers attained greater wealth as more people relocated to these areas. Developers advertised these suburbs as healthy, open spaces with parks, lakes and accessible means of transportation such as streetcar lines, railway services and, in later years, efficient automobile routes. Conveniences such as mail delivery, indoor plumbing, electricity, street lighting and paving were also promoted to attract more families.

T. L. Marsalis was responsible for creating Oak Cliff on the west side of the Trinity River valley overlooking Dallas, and his promotion and development ensured its early success. Oak Cliff soon was described as "a city within a city" and subsequent development and neighborhood growth ^{was} occurred along with Dallas' rapid expansion of the early 20th century. However, the evolution of Oak Cliff as a distinct but dependent suburb to Dallas was a measured difference ^{from} to the original settlement of the area.

II. EARLY HISTORY

The earliest permanent settlement of the Oak Cliff area occurred when W. S. Peters and his associates were awarded land in the region by the Congress of the Republic of Texas in 1841. Peter's Colony, as it was called, attracted a large number of settlers during the 1840s including John Neely Bryan, the founder of Dallas. William H. Hord was another of these pioneers and in early January 1845 he and his family arrived in a covered wagon from Tennessee and built a log cabin on high ground overlooking the west bank of the Trinity River, in present-day Oak Cliff. Others soon followed and this area developed as a rural, agricultural community of 80 to 90 families which became known as Hord's Ridge. William Hord later became a prominent local politician, serving as the first county clerk in Dallas County in 1846 and later as county judge.

Original settlers to the area, (including Samuel Browning, son-in-law of W. S. Peters, and John Crockett, later lieutenant governor of Texas,) envisioned Hord's Ridge as the county's primary community and campaigned for its designation as the permanent county seat when elections were held for that purpose in 1850. Despite their efforts, Dallas which had served as the temporary seat of government since the county's creation in 1846, narrowly defeated Hord's Ridge. The result of the election relegated Hord's Ridge to a secondary position in the county and cost the community the influence and commercial trade that came with county seat designation. Nearby communities such as La Reunion, Lancaster and Cedar Hill flourished briefly through the 1850s and early 1860s, but most economic activity and expansion took place in Dallas east of the Trinity River, opposite Hord's Ridge and present-day Oak Cliff.

One of Dallas County's earliest and most influential settlers west of the Trinity River was William Brown Miller, who emigrated from Kentucky in 1847. By 1868 he had acquired over 7,500 acres of land in southwest Dallas County, much of it covering present-day east Oak Cliff. Miller became one of the largest landholders, cotton growers and slave owners in the region. His former slaves were some of the first residents to settle in an area that now encompasses the Tenth Street Historic District and were the primary impetus for the subsequent development of Oak Cliff's original black neighborhood.

For Dallas and the region, the arrival of cost-efficient and reliable rail transportation (the Houston & Texas Central Railroad) in 1872 initiated an era of steady and prosperous development. The railroad brought merchants, bankers, carpenters, contractors, skilled laborers and many others, including T. L. Marsalis, who later played such a pivotal role in Oak Cliff's development. Upon arriving in ^{Dallas in} 1872, Marsalis established a wholesale grocery business which developed into one of the largest and most successful operations of its kind in the South. During his 17 years as a wholesale grocer, his annual sales at times exceeded \$20 million (McDonald 1978:213).

Although Marsalis attained tremendous personal ~~financial~~ wealth, he also contributed much of his time and energy to the development and improvement of Dallas. He helped organize the first fire company, participated in the organization of the Merchants' Exchange, and was a charter member of several of the railroad companies that built lines to the city. In 1881, while nearly all the streets of Dallas were unimproved, Marsalis paved the street in front of one of his four grocery stores with bois d'arc bricks.

III. PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

Joined by John S. Armstrong in 1884, T. L. Marsalis began to diversify his business operations. He conceived the idea of giving Dallas a residential and manufacturing suburb, and in 1887 he and Armstrong created the Dallas Land and Loan Company. They purchased 2,000 acres of land, which includes much of the project area, from Judge William H. Hord (including the 640-acre Hord Homestead tract) for half a million dollars and began their development of the area. Their new community was located on an elevated plateau overlooking Dallas and the surrounding countryside to the east. They selected "Oak Cliff" as a name because of the massive oak trees that sat high upon the rocky cliffs.

Oak Cliff officially opened on October 31, 1887 and an advertisement in the Dallas Morning News described the development as, "Oak Cliff, the Beautiful Suburb of Dallas! On the Bluffs, High, Picturesque, Well Drained, Healthy, Beautiful, Lakes, and Parks." The project met with immediate success, no doubt a result of the Dallas Land and Loan Company's promotional efforts but also because the firm's streetcar system began operations at the same time, thereby physically linking Oak Cliff with downtown Dallas. In a two-day period in November 1887, over \$51,000 in land parcels were sold for residential construction. The Daily Herald called it, "a great beginning of what will be the grandest suburban town in the South."

The founding and initial development of Oak Cliff reflected a trend that was occurring with greater frequency in Dallas during the late 19th century. As Diane Powers, a local historian, noted in a Master's thesis:

real estate sales amounting to \$4,500,00 for the first five months of 1887 included property bought by businessmen who had plans for creating residential communities on the outskirts of Dallas.

Twelve such sections of land were added to the city between January and May 1887. Although most of the additions' streets and blocks existed only on paper, the developers had no doubt about turning the corn fields and pastures into profitable developments by building streetcar lines from the property to the business district. Potential customers often purchased the lots because the promoters promised them that a streetcar line would be built; but in some instances the street railroads never materialized (Powers 1969:63-65).

Marsalis and Armstrong understood the relationship between the streetcar and real estate development, and with financial support from a group of investors which included, J. H. Simpson of St. Louis, Leon Blum of Galveston, Lieutenant Governor J. R. Hindman of Kentucky, and T. Field and J. T. Dargan of Oak Cliff, they formed the Dallas and Oak Cliff Elevated Railway Company in early 1887. By May of that year they obtained permission from the Dallas City Council for right-of-way within the city limits and began construction soon thereafter (Powers 1969:61-62).

The Dallas and Oak Cliff Elevated Railway had an authorized capital of \$400,000, and at times, as many as 200 men with a monthly payroll as high as \$18,000 were employed for its construction. The local firm of Bavousett and

Larkin Engineers headed the project. Modeled after New York City's elevated metropolitan rail system, the Dallas and Oak Cliff Elevated Railway ran from Commerce to Jefferson streets in Dallas, across the Trinity River and continued along the newly platted Jefferson Avenue in Oak Cliff, through and near several of the proposed historic districts. The steam-powered railway crossed the river on a rail viaduct and was promoted as "the first elevated railway in the South." However, the Dallas to Oak Cliff "elevated line" only ran above the ground when it crossed the river. Once it reached Oak Cliff on the west bank, the line branched into two sections: one led toward Spring Lake (later Lake Cliff) while the other continued up Jefferson Avenue to the end of the line at Tenth Street, in Oak Cliff's commercial center and within the Lancaster Avenue Commercial Historic District. Small wood ~~structures housed~~ passenger stations which stood at every other street along the route. The main ticket station was in the 100 block of Jefferson Avenue.

By 1894, the steam powered engines to Oak Cliff were abandoned in favor of a system powered by electricity. By 1904, a loop was completed in Oak Cliff with a path along Jefferson Avenue, Tyler Street, Seventh Street and Bishop (Gooden ----: 38). The Oak Cliff line continued to operate independently until September 22, 1919 when Dallas voters approved the consolidation of the Oak Cliff and the two other privately owned and operated streetcar lines. The new enterprise was called the Dallas Railway Company. (Gooden -----: 62). Nonetheless, the electric trolley car was the mainstay of passenger transportation in Oak Cliff until the 1930s, and residential and commercial development was dependent on rail line placement. According to Charles Cretien, who was reared in early Oak Cliff: "Suburban real estate located over

five or six blocks from a trolley line was difficult or almost impossible to sell" (Cretien 1963:62).

Thus, the streetcar line was the key to Oak Cliff's founding and early success. One local historian observed that Marsalis' Dallas Land and Loan Company endeavor was unlike earlier attempts because "... the Oak Cliff venture purported to be exactly what it was -- a real estate promotion. The newspapers understood this and matter of factly reported the company's plans for the sale of the property" (Powers 1969:63).

Despite Oak Cliff's promising future, Marsalis and Armstrong's business relationship became strained soon after the suburb was established. Marsalis thought it best to withhold some of the lots from the market after Oak Cliff's opening in anticipation that prices would increase. Armstrong, on the other hand, wanted to sell as many lots as possible, and the partnership dissolved as quickly as it had taken shape. Armstrong left to manage the wholesale grocery business, while Marsalis took over the real estate operation and proceeded to develop Oak Cliff entirely on his own (McDonald 1978:213).

Marsalis absorbed the initial land purchase, as well as street-improvement and promotional costs, and began an aggressive building campaign in the late 1880s to encourage development within the suburb. He paved streets at a cost of \$200,000 and imposed deed restrictions on all land transactions, requiring improvements to properties within a year of their purchase. Such measures, Marsalis assumed, would encourage prosperity and rapid growth.

In laying out the town, Marsalis utilized a rather rigid and uncreative north/south and east/west grid which completely ignored the Trinity River valley and surrounding topography. The exception to the plan was Jefferson

Avenue which was established in a curvilinear fashion through Oak Cliff to accommodate the streetcar line with its steam traction engines that lacked the power to directly climb Oak Cliff bluff.

The original Oak Cliff Township extended to Colorado Boulevard on the north to just beyond Miller Street (now Denley) on the east. Thirteenth Street bordered the south side, and the west was bounded by a north/south line between Spring Lake (later called Lake Cliff) and Marsalis Park. This area includes all or parts of the Lake Cliff, Lancaster Avenue, and Tenth Street Historic Districts. Subsequent suburban expansion in Oak Cliff occurred primarily to the west of the original township.

At the outset, Marsalis advertised the community as a health resort and utilized promotional schemes that typified similar suburban developments across the country. In 1889 he built the \$150,000 Parks Hotel which he hoped would bring more people to Oak Cliff and ultimately contribute to the suburb's overall growth and development. This monumental wood structure was modeled after the famous Hotel del Coronado in San Diego and featured "life-restoring mineral baths." Literature promoting the Parks Hotel cited the wonders and experiences of Oak Cliff's "cool and healthful breezes away from the dust and heat of the city" and noted that "to the south and southwest for hundreds of miles stretch level and unobstructed prairies over whose bosom these breezes sweep from the Gulf without infections from insalubrious conditions" (McDonald 1978:220).

Marsalis also created Oak Cliff Park (now called Marsalis Park and Zoo) from 180 acres of the old Hord property, and he enticed Dallas residents to visit Oak Cliff by giving free rides on the streetcar. By 1889, the park was

fully landscaped, and a dam was constructed across Cedar Creek forming a two-mile-long lake that contained 25 million gallons of water. A 3-story dance pavilion with a cedar-plank floor and a summer opera house were also constructed on the grounds. None of these features survive.

Although he promoted the favorable climate and recreational advantages of the community, Oak Cliff became better known as a fine residential section and a convenient addition to Dallas. An 1890 newspaper advertisement touted Oak Cliff's homes as being no more than three miles from the business center of Dallas with railway connections every ten minutes between downtown Dallas and downtown Oak Cliff. A number of prominent and successful businessmen of Dallas built their new homes in Oak Cliff during this period, including F. N. Oliver, later mayor of Oak Cliff; Oscar Dietzel, publisher of the *Texas Post*; and, Colonel William W. Lang, president of Texas Paper Mills Company (which he located in Oak Cliff). Ewing Avenue initially was developed as the most prestigious street in the community, and large, 2-story, Queen Anne-style residences lined blocks between Colorado Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue. By the early 1940s, however, all of these pre-1900 residential structures along Ewing Avenue had been demolished and replaced by commercial buildings. In fact, remarkably few pre-1900 structures survive in Oak Cliff or in any of the nominated historic districts.

Best known as a residential area, Oak Cliff also had many commercial and manufacturing businesses early in the suburb's history. By 1890, for example, Oak Cliff claimed four grocery stores, one feed and grain store, two meat markets, two physicians, one hardware store and three miles of transit line feeding into downtown Dallas. In all, the small community housed some 75

businesses. Oak Cliff's initial commercial center developed near the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Tenth Street, including much of the area within the Lancaster Avenue Commercial Historic District. Since the Dallas and Oak Cliff Elevated Railway terminated at this intersection and a station house stood nearby, businesses naturally gravitated toward this important location because of the large amount of activity and flow of people. Subsequent commercial development extended westward along Jefferson Avenue following extensions to the streetcar and later railroad line to Fort Worth. Nevertheless, the heart of Oak Cliff's commercial district remained the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Tenth Street. By 1905, as many as 20 brick business houses stood near this intersection.

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Marsalis successfully brought a variety of manufacturing establishments to Oak Cliff including Edward G. Patton & Company's great patent medicine laboratory; Colonel William Lang's Texas Paper Mills Company; the Oak Cliff Artesian Well Company, (which supplied the town's water independently of Dallas); the Oak Cliff Ice and Refrigeration Company; and the Oak Cliff Planing Mill. The planing mill and the paper mill were the only enterprises which offered any sizable employment opportunities in Oak Cliff. Thus, Dallas still provided goods and services for and employed most of Oak Cliff's residents. In fact, the headquarters of the Dallas Land and Loan Company, the Dallas and Oak Cliff Elevated Railway, the Oak Cliff Water Supply, the Electric Light and Power Company, and the Oak Cliff Hotel Company were all located in Dallas even though the focus of their business operations was in Oak Cliff. In short, Oak Cliff, though incorporated in 1890, was already highly dependent on Dallas.

As co-founder and principal developer of Oak Cliff, T. L. Marsalis

continued to play a pivotal role in the suburb's development through the early 1890s. Between 1888 and 1890 his Dallas Land and Loan Company opened several smaller additions west of the original township which pushed the boundaries of Oak Cliff south and west to Pembroke, Eighth and Willomet streets. The Hillside Addition, which includes the N. Bishop Avenue Commercial Historic District, was among the largest and most important of these developments. Although much of its property was later replatted as part of the Miller and Stemmons Addition, the Hillside Addition reflected Marsalis' success and Oak Cliff's growth soon after the suburb's establishment. By 1890, only three years after its founding, Oak Cliff claimed a population of almost 3,000. To accommodate the influx of residents, Marsalis and others created new additions, most of which were developed near existing streetcar lines. In 1890 Marsalis boasted that Oak Cliff had nearly 2,000 completed residences, over 30 miles of paved streets, a water works system and a planned electric light plant (Dallas Land & Loan Company n.d.:n.p.).

Education was another concern of Marsalis, and at the outset he had planned to establish an institution of higher education in Oak Cliff. As early as 1889, he chartered an application for the Oak Cliff Female Institute, selected a site and commissioned an architectural rendering of the proposed structure. He insisted the college would open sometime in 1892 on the south side of Eighth Street between Marsalis and Lancaster avenues. However, the nationwide financial Panic of 1893 depleted available sources of revenue and wiped away any hope of the Institute's ever becoming a reality. Nevertheless, Oak Cliff's first public educational facility, the Oak Cliff Central School, opened in 1893, and at the same time, The Park Hotel was converted to the Oak

Cliff College for Young Ladies. Dr. Edward G. Patton established the Patton Seminary in 1895. Patton, a wealthy druggist, was better known for concocting and manufacturing a patented medicine known as Patton's Chill Tonic. Built at the northwest corner of Lancaster and Ninth streets, the school was taken over by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1905 and became the Texas Baptist University. The institution closed after a few years because of financial difficulties and the building was razed.

The Panic of 1893 stifled growth and expansion in Oak Cliff and Dallas and forced retrenchment ^{by} of Marsalis and his pool of investors. He sold the Dallas Land and Loan Company and all its holdings to Bartholomew Blankenship's Dallas and Oak Cliff Real Estate Company which divided the spacious lots of Marsalis' original development into smaller ones to allow for the construction of a greater number of modest and less expensive houses. At this point, the elite status which the initial wave of developers had promoted and maintained in Oak Cliff began to wane, and the suburb began its reorientation as a predominately middle-class area.

Marsalis' goal to have Oak Cliff develop as a community independent of Dallas was never realized, and finally abandoned by the turn of the century. Between 1900 and 1903 Oak Cliff voters defeated various proposals for annexation to Dallas, but the suburb's growing financial difficulties led residents to finally pass the annexation referendum by a mere 18 votes in 1903. The annexation issue created a bitter division among the residents of Oak Cliff, but the newly annexed suburb proved to be a prosperous and dynamic extension of Dallas' westward expansion.

The annexation of Oak Cliff was but one indication of Dallas' substantial growth during the early 20th century, and the event heralded community-wide prosperity, expansion and development. Dallas further consolidated its position as the primary marketing center in the region; creating many new jobs and an increase in the city's population. Suburban developments extended in virtually all directions from downtown Dallas, including Oak Cliff which began its recovery from a decade of near stagnation.

After annexation, Oak Cliff once again attracted land speculators and the suburb experienced rapid change and development. New subdivisions, both large and small, were created to ease Dallas' housing shortages. These real estate developments generally were established along existing streetcar lines or along newly constructed interurban railways, such as the Fort Worth Interurban line along Oak Cliff's Jefferson Avenue.

One of the large and most important of these new subdivisions was the Miller and Stemmons Addition which opened in December 1903 and was developed primarily by Scott Miller and Leslie Stemmons. Much of its land originally was part of the Hillside Addition which was platted in 1890 by T. L. Marsalis' Dallas Land and Loan Company and later repartitioned. Initial development occurred principally on Bishop Avenue where large Classical Revival-styled dwellings were built. These houses represented the first substantial residential construction projects in Oak Cliff since the Panic of 1893. Bishop Avenue, which extended through the mid-section of the addition, became the showcase street, no doubt because of the streetcars which ran along it. Scott Miller and Leslie Stemmons, like other successful developers in Oak Cliff and Dallas at that time, recognized the many marketing advantages of majestic

homes lining the streetcar route.

The Miller and Stemmons Addition encouraged similar real estate developments nearby. In 1905 John Zang opened the Crystal Hill Addition, an area south of the Miller and Stemmons Addition and bordered by Beckley, Davis, Elsbeth, and Nueces streets. His original plans called for an exclusive, affluent subdivision, but initial property sales were disappointing and he was forced to parcel out his holdings to other developers in the 1910s. The area was then marketed for middle-class housing.

Several smaller subdivisions opened subsequent to Miller and Stemmons and Crystal Hill additions and continued the pattern of locating along streetcar or interurban lines. The Mills Addition, for example, opened on land between Jefferson, Ellis and Mills streets and the North Texas Traction Company (interurban rail) right-of-way. Early in 1904, the Betterton Circle subdivision in eastern Oak Cliff opened. This section, comprising the southern portion of the proposed Tenth Street Historic District, was bounded by Greenwood, Tenth and Betterton streets and was conveniently located adjacent to Waco-bound interurban line. E. W. Foster's subdivision, which included property between Twelfth, Good, Foster and Beckley streets, was filed in 1905 .

Taking cues from T. L. Marsalis' early real estate promotional schemes, local businessmen Charles A. Mangold and John F. Zang in 1906 acquired land around Spring Lake, in the north part of Oak Cliff, which they developed into the Lake Cliff Amusement Park. A man-made lake, created several years earlier by the social group Llewellyn Club, was planned to attract people to this part of Oak Cliff and to spur still more real estate development. Mangold and Zang

invested heavily in the park and erected carnival rides, dance pavilions, a roller-skating rink, three theaters (one for opera, one for "motion pictures" and one for live performances) and a large pool and bathhouse. Although immensely popular, the Lake Cliff Amusement Park operated continuously with severe financial difficulties which ultimately forced Mangold and Zang to abandon the project. In 1913 they conveyed the land to the City of Dallas for \$55,000. Nevertheless, the park fulfilled its primary function which was to encourage further residential development in the area. Established neighborhoods like the Miller and Stemmons and Crystal Hill additions experienced growth because of the park, and owners of previously unimproved tracts of land also benefited from its operation. Property to the south and east of the park became attractive areas for residential development especially after the city dismantled the rides and other amusement park-related structures and then redeveloped the land as an urban park. The tranquil setting helped induce people to the area.

Others parts of Oak Cliff were also developed during the early 20th century and much of this activity was concentrated along Jefferson Avenue and west of Tyler Street where the Fort Worth interurban line was built. Numerous subdivisions opened close to Jefferson Avenue which pushed Oak Cliff further westward and made the suburb more elongated and decentralized. This pattern mirrored earlier developments that also followed streetcar lines.

One of the best known of these new residential subdivisions was the Winnetka Heights Addition, much of which is in the Winnetka Heights Historic District (N. R. 1983). In 1908, T. S. Miller, J. P. Blake, L. A. Stemmons, and R. S. Waldron, platted the area to be one of Oak Cliff's more exclusive

and prestigious subdivisions, and they promoted it extensively in local newspapers. They cited its many advantages and amenities. One advertisement described it as "Dallas' Ideal Suburb" (National Register files). Another advertisement appearing in 1910 said that "Winnetka has the requisites necessary for a home or investment. Each lot has Artesia Water, Gas, Lights, Telephones, Cement sidewalks, Curbs and Gutters and Paved Streets" (National Register files). Consequently, lots sold quickly and the area soon attracted many financially successful citizens including R. S. Waldron who built a large, Classical Revival-inspired home that he called Rosemont. More common, however, were Prairie School-influenced homes that were constructed in the first years of development. During the late 1910s and 1920s, lots were subdivided to make room for more modest but still finely crafted bungalows and cottages.

As Winnetka Heights was planned and initially developed, another subdivision, the Oak Cliff Annex, was established north of Winnetka Heights, along the Oak Cliff streetcar route. The Oak Cliff Annex differed, albeit minimally, from other contemporaneous subdivisions in Oak Cliff because it departed from the rigid grid plan that was used throughout the suburb. While much of the addition featured the familiar rectangular block/lot-and-street layout, the Oak Cliff Annex had one thoroughfare which literally extended diagonally through the addition and terminated at a streetcar stop at Seventh and Tyler streets. The subdivision's developer, the Interstate Realty Corporation, was probably trying to stimulate interest in the area by creating a panoramic view from the streetcar. Despite such considerations, the Oak Cliff Annex grew slowly, in sharp contrast to its neighbor to the south, Winnetka Heights. A

historian noted that most of Oak Cliff Annex's first structures were multi-family units intended to house early residents of Winnetka Heights as they waited for the completion of their homes.

As a result of the various development schemes and Dallas' continued growth, the population of Oak Cliff rose to 8,179 by 1910 - an increase of 125 percent from the decade before. The suburb contained 21 grocery stores, two bakeries, two dairies, six meat markets, four drug stores, three restaurants, four saloons, a hotel, and the only bowling alley in Dallas at the time. The influx of the middle class resulted in the establishment of new mercantile businesses and professional services, several clinics, 13 churches, a cemetery, seven public schools, a fire station and eight physicians. Nearly all commercial development was concentrated in small pockets adjacent to street railway stops and transfers (i.e. Jefferson Avenue and Davis Street).

Oak Cliff's substantial growth was matched in other parts of Dallas where a large number of new subdivisions were platted. These new suburban developments generally were established along streetcar or interurban lines and were intended for all groups of citizens but were targeted primarily for middle and upper class whites. Although these additions competed in varying degrees with developmental efforts in Oak Cliff, only a few directly affected the character of Oak Cliff for they siphoned off some of Dallas' more affluent and prominent citizens. Examples include additions that encompass much of the Munger Place Historic District (N.R. 1978) and the Swiss Avenue Historic District (N.R.1974) east of the Trinity River in Dallas. Both areas have dense concentrations of stately and majestic dwellings and their success further thwarted efforts to make Oak Cliff a more elite and prestigious resi-

dential area. Consequently, the suburb's population became increasingly middle class, and new houses continued their trend ^{toward modesty} ~~to be more modest~~ in scale and detailing.

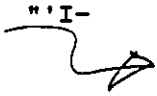
Physical growth in Oak Cliff during the early 20th century proceeded ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ a rather piecemeal and generally unplanned basis, but streetcar and interurban lines still influenced subdivision placement and new residential construction. However, a turning point in Oak Cliff's history and physical development occurred in 1912 when a permanent bridge was erected across the Trinity River. Although the need for such a structure had long been recognized, increased use of automobiles likely provided the financial justification for the bridge's high cost of construction. Charles A. Mangold, who earlier was involved with the development of Lake Cliff Amusement Park and the Crystal Hill Addition, led efforts to construct a permanent, flood-proof viaduct across the Trinity River. His work culminated in 1910 when the Dallas County Commissioners Court contracted with Hedrick and Cochrane of Kansas City, Kansas, to build the Oak Cliff-Dallas Bridge, now known as the Houston Street Viaduct (N.R. 1984). When completed in February 1912, the structure reportedly was the longest reinforced-concrete bridge in the world, measuring 5,840 feet in length. Its construction facilitated the growing number of local citizens who purchased automobiles and commuted from Oak Cliff to Dallas.

As important as the rail system was in Oak Cliff's early development, efficient automobile access provided by the Trinity River bridge proved to be a major new stimulant in real estate speculation and residential expansion. Land that previously was less desirable because of its distance from fixed rail lines was now considered more appealing. Residents who owned cars were

no longer dependent on the streetcar as their primary means of transportation; this provided more opportunities for local developers. Increased usage of the automobile in later years ultimately caused the decline and demise of the local streetcar/interurban system, which ^{though it remained in use} nonetheless remained popular through the ^{1930s} ~~third decade of the 20th century.~~

The construction of the Oak Cliff-Dallas Bridge was one of the many profound changes that occurred in Dallas during the 1910s when the city developed into the primary market, trading and garment center for a multi-state region and ~~was~~ the headquarters for numerous financial service industries (investment, banking, insurance). As Dallas' economy became increasingly diversified and the city expanded rapidly in both a physical and demographic sense, civic leaders recognized the necessity for planned and managed growth. They solicited the advice of professionals who could look at Dallas as a whole and suggest innovative measures to deal with existing and anticipated problems. In 1910 Dallas City Commissioners and the Park Board hired George Kessler, a Kansas City-based landscape architect, to devise a master plan to cope with the city's growth and to provide suggestions for traffic improvements and parks acquisition.

Kessler earlier had been commissioned by the cities of Fort Worth, Denver, Kansas City and Houston to develop long-range plans for all or parts of these communities. He came to Dallas in 1909 and two years later submitted his report. The Kessler Plan, as it came to be known, became the centerpiece for municipal planning efforts in Dallas for many years. The plan and its impact on Dallas was analyzed by Wilson (1989) in his study of the City Beautiful Movement who noted Kessler's ^sassessment of Dallas' development. "I-



nstead of having been planned,' the residential growth of Dallas, 'as in other cities,' was 'directed by the land speculator who, with rare exceptions, gives little or no attention to continuous or ample thoroughfares'" (Wilson 1989:261). Consequently, he recommended that many important street be widened or realigned and that the city adopt uniform codes for street construction and improvement. He also urged that a loop system be built around the city in anticipation of ^{the} increase use of automobiles. He introduced the idea of zoning and recommended that railroad tracks be rerouted and that a union depot be built. He was a strong advocate of parks and suggested that the Trinity River be leveed to reclaim bottomlands (Wilson 1989:261-265).

In Oak Cliff, Kessler suggested the creation of a green belt along Coombs Creek and Cedar Creek, and he also recommended that an improved, more-efficient loop highway be constructed to connect Oak Cliff with Dallas. In addition, he outlined an ambitious plan for the reclamation of the Trinity River floodplain. Although these and other provisions of Kessler's plan were never fully implemented, his influence was felt for many years. His contributions in Oak Cliff are best recognized by the subsequent establishment and development of an affluent neighborhood that presumably was named for him. The five Kessler additions incorporated many of his landscaping design ideas including the greenbelt along Coombs Creek (Brennan 1975:21).

As Kessler's plan was developed, the local streetcar system was in a state of transition. Intense and prolonged competition among the many companies that operated streetcars resulted in the abandonment of some lines and the consolidation of others. By 1910 only three companies were in operation and all were privately owned and managed. Moreover, the purpose and intent of

streetcars had changed considerably since they were first introduced in the 1880s. While they previously were an integral element of real estate development, streetcar lines were increasingly perceived by citizens as a necessity of urban life and they believed that greater and more strict regulation was needed. New measures were passed by the City Council to improve safety, maintain streets, allow transfers between systems and impose uniform fares. The streetcar companies opposed these and other changes but they grudgingly complied with city ordinances. Matters reached a climax on September 22, 1919 when voters approved a referendum that called for the consolidation of the three streetcar lines (Gooden -----:62). Although the system operated more efficiently, the streetcar era in Dallas had reached its apex and it began its gradual decline. The automobile slowly became the preferred means of transportation.

Kessler was an early proponent of the automobile and he correctly anticipated the significant and ~~dominate~~^{vt} role it would have in the local transportation network. However, the residents of Oak Cliff, as a whole, resisted this change because of ~~the~~^{the} streetcar system ~~that~~^{was} was successfully operating at the time. This reliance on the streetcar continued to influence land development in Oak Cliff, as a small number of subdivisions were still platted near existing streetcar lines. Rosemont Crest Addition, for example, was established in 1913 and straddled the Fort Worth interurban line that ran along Jefferson Avenue. Although the founding of this addition reflected the importance of the streetcar system in land development in Oak Cliff, it was one of the last such subdivisions. Later additions, such as the Kessler subdivisions in north-central Oak Cliff, were developed with the automobile in mind.

Oak Cliff maintained its rapid growth during the 1910s. Its population increased from 8,179 in 1910 to 18,041 in 1920. With this enormous thrust of people, commercial and institutional facilities expanded. Commercial enterprises that opened during the decade included five bakeries, 23 meat markets, 11 drug stores, four feed and grain stores. More significant newcomers to Oak Cliff were the first small bank (Oak Cliff Bank and Trust) and the first clothing shops, oil and gas stations, auto dealerships and chain grocery stores. Institutional or professional services available included the Carnegie Public Library (razed), 21 churches, 11 schools, three fire stations, two post offices, four parks and a small number of physicians (Brennan 1975:18).

Nevertheless, hospitals, attorneys, insurance companies and significant employment centers were still mostly unavailable in Oak Cliff. The nature of the commercial expansion, which was comprised primarily of small goods and service shops near transit stops, indicated the absence of a self-sustaining community and the continued evolution of a suburb dependent on Dallas for employment and many professional services.

Unlike other parts of Dallas where automobile ownership had become fairly common by the mid-1920s, Oak Cliff continued to rely heavily on the streetcar system, and the predominately middle-class character of the population inhibited widespread early usage of the still-expensive automobile. However, the automobile's impact by 1920 was beginning to become apparent in the emerging brick commercial strip along Jefferson Avenue and in small commercial nodes along and adjacent to primary street routes connecting Dallas and Oak Cliff. Many of these businesses served as auto sales and service stations. In addition, a new building type was being erected in Oak Cliff

which reflected the slow but steady rise in automobile use in the suburb.

Sanborn maps of 1922 showed detached garages as an increasingly popular out-building in newly developed neighborhoods.

Prosperity continued during the 1920s which also contributed to commercial, industrial, and retail expansion. Sanborn maps of 1922 indicated the Oak Cliff Planing & Manufacturing Company, Oak Cliff Ice & Storage Company, and Oak Cliff Paper Mills still operated as they had in 1890. New industrial concerns in Oak Cliff included Dallas Cooperage and Woodenware Company, Texas Seed & Plant Company, Dallas Railway Company, Consumers Ice Company, and Texas Electric Railway Companies Car Shops. The Republic National Life Building was built in 1929, providing the centerpiece for subsequent commercial development further west on Jefferson Avenue. At least three lumber companies were in the area providing accessible construction materials and plans for the now almost constant residential building activity.

Architectural forms that were popular in Oak Cliff during the 1920s echoed contemporaneous trends ~~that were typical of~~ ⁱⁿ other residential neighborhoods in Dallas ^{and across the country}. Bungalows and Tudor Revival-influenced houses were the preferred domestic architectural expressions, and numerous examples of each abound throughout Oak Cliff. A few, especially in more affluent neighborhoods such as the Kessler Park area, were ^{custom} ~~unique~~ designs commissioned from ~~any of~~ the growing number of architectural firms operating in Dallas. Most houses in Oak Cliff, however, were built from designs that appeared in pattern books, catalogs and other publications catering to the expanding middle class. Many Dallas-based architectural firms produced innumerable house designs and provided a wide selection of plans, thereby introducing new architectural forms

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These plans were becoming marketable through lumber yards...

to local home builders. One such firm was Ye Planery which was founded in Los Angeles, California, but relocated to Dallas because of its expanding and increasingly important role in the regional economy and its strategic location as a marketing center in a four-state area. A copy of their 1914 Beautiful Homes booklet provides a selection of 75 exterior views and floor plans of the firm's "complete stock of over two thousand different plans of California Bungalows, Swiss Chalets, Italian Villa, Spanish Hacienda, Old English, French Chateau, Sullivanesque and Frank Lloyd Wright type houses, ranging in price from \$750.00 and up" (Ye Planery 1914).

Kessler Park was the first residential neighborhood in Oak Cliff designed to take advantage of new street routes opened by the automobile. Kessler Park was opened in four stages in the mid-1920s during a decade of great prosperity in Dallas; however, it failed to reestablish Oak Cliff as a socially prominent community since other exclusive neighborhood developments were being built in more desirable north Dallas.

Although enduring some loss of prestige to other neighborhoods of Dallas, the population growth of Oak Cliff continued unabated through the 1920s; from 18,000 in 1920 to 37,000 in 1930. In the late 1920s Oak Cliff was firmly established as a stable, middle-class neighborhood. Monthly mortgages and rents in Oak Cliff averaged just under \$50; slightly higher than the city average of \$42.50 but considerably below the rates found in more expensive areas of Dallas like Belmont, Oak Lawn, Highland Park and Munger Place (average \$66.21) (Dallas Chamber of Commerce 1927:23). Commercial growth matched that of residential growth although it was primarily restricted to Jefferson Avenue and to the small concentrations of business areas near transit routes

which catered to individual neighborhoods.

Although the decade from 1930 to 1940 was dominated nationally and regionally by the Great Depression, Oak Cliff's population continued to increase, but at a less rapid pace. The 1940 census documented a 54 percent increase in population to over 57,000. During this decade, few major new areas developed, reflecting the economic conditions prevailing at the time. Rather, smaller additions such as East Kessler Park (1937) filled in the few remaining open areas, continuing a general pattern established in the previous two decades.

From the turn of the century into the 1970s, the suburban growth of Oak Cliff has fluctuated from prosperity to depression similar to many American suburbs. Since growth and progress in Oak Cliff is deeply embedded in factors which affect Dallas, it will be difficult for Oak Cliff to emerge as a more independent entity as it once aspired. However, its built environment and suburban historical development reflect the unique status of Oak Cliff, and document the contribution its neighborhoods and expansion have made to Dallas.