



Dallas Municipal Archives

Archives Collections Finding Guides and Inventories

Guide No.18
Fair Park, 1888-1930; 1972-1992
(Collection 91-079)

Processed by:
John H. Slate, CA
Cindy Smolovik, CA, CRM

Records Management Division
Office of the City Secretary
City of Dallas, Texas

Collection Range: 1888-1930; 1972-1992

Two feet, 3.5 inches linear.

Land deeds, land transfer documents, contracts, reports and studies, printed materials

Collection Scope and Content Note:

Fair Park, the site of the State Fair of Texas, is located in east Dallas near the downtown business district. It is owned by the city of Dallas and managed by the Dallas Park and Recreation Department. The 277-acre site is home to the annual State Fair of Texas, the Cotton Bowl stadium, and five museums. Fair Park houses one of the greatest concentrations of early twentieth-century Art Deco exposition buildings in the United States.

The original eighty-acre site was purchased by Captain William H. Gaston from the Thomas Lagow league and the John Grigsby league for \$16,000 in 1886 and deeded to the newly chartered Dallas State Fair and Exposition Association. In return Gaston received 140 shares of stock, which he later donated to the fair organization. The Dallas Exposition opened its first fair on October 26, 1886.

Fair Park was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1986 because of its exceptional significance in American history. This significance is derived from its 105-year association with the State Fair of Texas and as the site of the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition. While the location of Fair Park dates back to the original 1886 fairgrounds, many of the existing buildings and public spaces were constructed for the 1936 Exposition which attracted over 7 million visitors.

In preparation for the Centennial, the fairgrounds were expanded and transformed into a showplace of modern buildings under the remarkable direction of Centennial Architect George Dahl and consulting architect Paul Cret. The design theme for the Exposition was "Texanic" and "Southwestern." This regional flavor, intermingled with modern concepts, was the basic design style for both the renovation of existing Fair Park structures and the design of new buildings.

After sixty-five years, all of the permanent and many of the temporary buildings, murals, statues and bas-relief sculptures survive. In addition, a number of buildings have been constructed since the Centennial; most blend well with the character of the 1936 Exposition buildings.

In 1904, this special park was acquired when the State Fair met with reverses in the way of a destructive fire and unprofitable exhibition. Fair Park became Dallas' second park when the City of Dallas agreed to pay the mortgage and take title to the property, build exhibition halls, and start a sewer-water system with a \$125,000 bond issue. Since that time, the City has leased the

land to the State Fair Association for a few weeks out of every year in order for the fair to be held. For twenty-four days each year in October, Fair Park experiences the vitality and social interaction that has characterized state fairs since the turn of the century. During the last decade, attendance at the Fair has surged to 3.5 million, ranking it as the largest annual exposition in the United States.

The collection consists of land deeds, land transfer documents, contracts, reports and studies, maps, and printed materials documenting the early history of Fair Park and planning studies and promotional materials for Fair Park dating 1972-1992.

Arrangement: Two primary series: land transfer documents and planning studies.

Archivist's Note: Please see also related collection 95-027, "Fair Park."

Box 1 Land Acquisition (*fragile condition – please consult archivist*)

- Folder 1. Agreement: Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition Association and T. L. Bradford Leasing. Leasing property inside the fairgrounds, July 1899.
2. Offer of sale to the City of Dallas by the Stockholders of Texas State Fair, January 25, 1904.
3. Resolution: Election on purchasing of the Texas State Fair Grounds, adopted February 22, 1904.
4. Communication from Texas State Fair and its directors, Filed March 26, 1904.
5. Report on Public Improvements and Public Grounds and Building. Committees Supporting Contract with State Fair of Texas, July 25, 1904.
6. Levy of a special tax for four years for the purpose of acquiring the State Fair grounds, August 17, 1904.
7. Share holders Texas State Fair convey fairgrounds to the City of Dallas, August 4, 1904, witnessed September 29, 1904.
8. Report of Board of Commissioners, "State Fair of Texas Matters", August 22, 1904.
9. Contract: City of Dallas and State Fair of Texas, concerning the rights to Texas State Fair Grounds, October 3, 1904.
10. Release of Lien, J. T. Trezevant, Trustee to Texas State Fair, Payment of Bonds issued April 10, 1900 complete, October 11, 1904.
11. Report to the City Council from Mayor Barry, closing the transaction by the City of Dallas, taking the title to the State Fair Grounds from the Texas State Fair by deed dated June 27, 1904, report dated October 11, 1904.

Box 1 (continued)

- Folder 12. Land Acquisition: Release of mortgage of Deed of Trusts, John H. Gaston, et. al. to Texas State Fair, October 11, 1904.
13. Contract: City of Dallas and State Fair of Texas, approved August 1904, filed October 15, 1904.
14. Resolution to accept Texas State Fair proposition which contemplates sale of property, 1904.
15. Form of contract between City of Dallas and State Fair of Texas, 1904.
16. City National Bank Draft, 1906
17. Agreement between the City of Dallas and American Exchange Bank. Payment for land acquisition, May 1906.
18. Fidelity real estate and trust company certification of directors, December 30, 1907.
19. Land acquisition: Cashier notices. Enlargement of Fair Park, December 19, 1907.
20. Land acquisition: American Exchange National Bank promissory notes, May 21, 1907 and December 1907.
21. Land acquisition: Board of Directors Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, Resolution to sell property in Fair Park tract, Thomas and Richard Lagow surveys to the City of Dallas, December 30, 1907.
22. Land acquisition: deed jacket.
23. Land acquisition: Kimbrough Property sold to Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, July 20, 1906.
24. Land acquisition: Insurance of title for original owner: Robert Lee and Dora Swope, and Guaranty Company, May 16, 1908.

Box 1 (continued)

- Folder 25. Land acquisition: Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, December 30, 1907.
26. Land Acquisition: Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, December 30, 1907.
27. Land Acquisition: Property of Agnes Amanda Fortune sold to the City of Dallas, July 10, 1908.

Box 2 Land Acquisition

- Folder 1. Land Acquisition: Warranty deed for property of Eliza McCoy, deceased, sold by estate executor, J. M. McCoy, to Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, June 16, 1906.
2. Land Acquisition: Warranty deed for property of D. H. Tucker (of Georgia) sold to Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, September 13, 1906.
3. Land Acquisition: Warranty deed for property N. J. Hustead sold to Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, October 1, 1906.
4. Land deed for property of Sam and T. A. Hunnicut sold to N. J. Hustead, September 3, 1888.
5. Land Acquisition: Warranty deed for property of C. C. Weichsel sold to Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, November 5, 1907.
6. Land Acquisition: Warranty deed for property of Lida and Emanuel Amato sold to Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, January 8, 1906.
7. Fair Park Lands envelope
8. Land deed for property of John M. McAfee sold to A. B. Jones, June 22, 1896.

Box 2 (continued)

- Folder 9. Property Transfer of property of Charles E. Jones (of Louisiana) to John M. McAfee, June 22, 1896 (land originally sold to Charles E. Jones by J. T. Baker and A. V. Hexter.)
10. Land deed for property of J. T. Backer and A. V. Hexter sold to Charles E. Jones, July 17, 1888.
11. Release of vendors' or mortgage lien A. V. Hexter, et. al and Charles E. Jones, October 14 - November 12, 1889 with promissory note dated July 17, 1888.
12. Warranty deed property of J. T. Baker and A. V. Hexter sold to George E. Jones, November 16, 1889.
13. Land deed for property of J. T. Baker and A. V. Hexter sold to George E. Jones, December 9, 1889.
14. Land deed for property of J. T. Baker sold to J. L. Tucker, December 13, 1890.
15. Land deed for property of Allie Hexter to J. L. Tucker, December 27, 1890.
16. Land Acquisition: Release of Vendors' or Mortgage Lien by George A. Jones to J. L. Tucker, December 21, 1891.
17. Release of Vendors' Lien by Sam Hunnicutt to J. N. Vickery, May 23, 1887.
18. Land deed for property of J. N. Vickery and Mary J. Vickery sold to E. H. Lambert, April 20, 1893.
19. Land deed for property of Elijah H. and James Lambert sold to J. M. Vickery, April 29, 1897.
20. Deed of Trust for property of J. N. and Mary J. Vickery sold to W. E. Hawkins, trustee for the benefit of Jno. A. Crowdus, May 19, 1897 (originally owned by Sam Hunnicutt.)

Box 2 (continued)

- Folder 21. Affidavit to Homestead by J. N. and Mary J. Vickery, May 18, 1897.
22. Sworn statement by W. R. Lagow for ownership of Lagow land by Lagow family since 1879, May 18, 1897.
 23. Deed of Release by John A. Crowdus, releases lien to J. N. and Mary J. Vickery, promissory note paid in full, November 20, 1899.
 24. Warranty deed for property of J. N. and Mary J. Vickery sold to J. C. Toney, October 17, 1901.
 25. Title paper for property of J. L. Toney to C. Weichsel, Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, closed May 31, 1906 (envelope).
 26. Land Acquisition: Warranty deed for property of J. L. and Emma Toney sold to Fidelity Real Estate and Trust Company, July 6, 1906.
 27. Correction deed for J. A. Vickery to J. L. Toney, May 28, 1906, filed June 7, 1906.
 28. Release of Vendors' or Mortgage Lien by H. E. and W. B. Jausel releasing Mrs. Awato, June 3, 1903, filed June 8, 1906.
 29. Warranty deed for property of H. E. Jausel et al to Mrs. Lida Awato, filed June 8, 1906.
 30. Land Acquisition: Release of Vendors' Lien by Emma J. Spruce to T. B. Smith, November 7, 1911. [Lee Pandres Property]
 31. Land Acquisition: Tax Office statements by T. B. Smith for the year 1910, dated December 6, 1911.
 32. Land Acquisition: Property of T. B. and Eufaula Smith sold to L. Lee Pandres, November 6, 1911.

Box 2 (continued)

- Folder 33. Land Acquisition: Property of Lee Pandres, letter of purchase to City of Dallas, Park Board, November 10, 1911.
34. Land Acquisition: Property of Lee Pandres document jacket.
35. Auditorium contract, Klien Brothers, July 31, 1905.
36. Agreement: City of Dallas Park Board and the State Fair of Texas and the Firm of Smith and Rawlings for work on the Auditorium building.
37. Special assessments Parry Avenue, July 24, 1912.
38. Property in H. C. Long Survey owned by Dallas Compress Company, sold to the City of Dallas, April 12, 1912.
39. Dallas Compress Company, Financial documents.
40. Special assessment - land owned by F. E. Ritter, paid to contractor J. R. Gregory for paving Second Avenue and land owned by City of Dallas Park Board, May 29, 1912.
41. Title H. C. Long Survey, March 25, 1912, includes correspondence concerning the title, April 10, 1912.
42. Resolution City of Dallas Park Board concerning Auditorium, Brown-Crummer Investment, July 18, 1924.
43. Auditorium contract, June 18, 1924.
44. Auditorium contract, May 22, 1924.
45. Agreement between the City of Dallas and State Fair of Texas, 1924.
46. List of releases turned over to Pete Cossu Locke, November 19, 1930.

Box 3 Continued Development of Fair Park

- Folder 1. Fair Park Development/Design Concept Plan, November 1983.
2. Fair Park Plan, 1972.
 3. Fair Park, descriptive brochure includes brief historical sketch, 1992.
 4. Proposal to evaluate strategic economic and land use alternatives for the 250 acre Fair Park, 1978.

Box 4 Continued Development of Fair Park

- Folder 1. Proposal to evaluate strategic economic and land use alternatives for the 250 acre Fair Park, 1978. (second copy)
2. Evaluation of Prospective Uses for Dallas Fair Park, 6/15/78.
 3. Proposal for Land Study, LFWF, 1978.
 4. Proposal for Land Study, Charles T. Thompson, 1978.
 5. Plan and Program for Fair Park, WMRT, 4/15/78.
 6. Fair Park Consultant Qualifications, Gladstone Associates, 1978.
 7. Proposal for Redevelopment Economic Research Associates, 1978.
 8. Appraisal of Cotton Bowl Station, 1/1/69.
 9. Proposal for Fair Parks, Carr Lynch Associates, 1978.
 10. Management Resources For Fair Park Redevelopment Design, 11/1983.
 11. Proposal for Fair Park, Laventhal and Horweth, 1978.

Box 5 Continued Development of Fair Park

- Folder 1. Proposal for Fair Park, Coopers & Lybrand, 1978.
2. Proposal for Fair Park, Arthur Young, 1978.
3. Fair Park Planning Study, 1981.
4. Fair Park Planning Study, 1981.
5. Fair Park Programming Development, Management Study, 2/1981.
6. Fair Park Music Hall, 1977.
7. Comprehensive Arts Facility Plan for Dallas - New Life for Fair Park, 10/1977.

Box 6 Continued Development of Fair Park

- Folder 1. Summary Fair Park Plan, 1971.
2. Fair Park Historic District, 1985.
3. Fair Park Parking Study, 7/1986.

Box 7 Continued Development of Fair Park

- Folder 1. LFWF - Summary Report - Fair Park Plan, c. 1979