

St. Paul, Collin County, Texas Historical Marker Application

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by Joy Gough

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**Context**

St. Paul is one of the oldest communities in Collin County. It is located in the south-central part of the county about thirteen miles southeast of the county seat of McKinney, sandwiched between the present-day cities of Lucas and Wylie. St. Paul predates both cities. Originally, the eastern border of St. Paul was the East Fork of the Trinity River. When Lake Lavon was created in 1953, it became the eastern border.<sup>1</sup> St. Paul's western border is present-day FM 1378, also known as Country Club Road. The original name of the stretch of the road as it passed by St. Paul was Colony Road. It was the eastern border of the Peters Colony. None of St. Paul was in the Peters Colony.<sup>2</sup>

The name of the town comes from the St. Paul Catholic Church, which was located in the area. The church is said to be the first Catholic Church in Texas north of San Antonio. The St. Paul Catholic Cemetery is the only Catholic cemetery in Collin County.<sup>3</sup>

At one time St. Paul had two schools with a teacherage, two churches, a cemetery, a post office, a general store, a grist mill, blacksmith shop and a gin. St. Paul was always a farming community, growing wheat, corn, onions and cotton, and raising livestock. In 1962 it had Newell's Machine Shop.<sup>4</sup> It was incorporated in 1971 and has a current population a little over 1000.<sup>5</sup> St. Paul is one of the few early farming communities in Collin County that has survived into the twenty-first century without being absorbed by a larger city.

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<sup>1</sup> Lake Lavon was formed when a dam was built in Collin County across the East Fork of the Trinity River, just south of the juncture with Pilot Grove Creek.

<sup>2</sup> The Peters Colony was a Republic of Texas emigration and land colony located in North Central Texas whose eastern border bisected Collin County.

<sup>3</sup> Joy Gough, CEMETERIES OF COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS.

<sup>4</sup> Frank X. Tolbert, *Dallas Morning News*, "Tolbert's Texas: About the Women Of Vashti Town," May 6, 1962.

<sup>5</sup> St. Paul website, <http://stpaultexas.us/History/History.htm>

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### Overview

Collin County was created out of Fannin County in 1845 when Texas became a state. One newspaper correspondent says that before any communities were established in south-central Collin County, the area was called Lazy Neck. He says that the area from McKinney to Rockwall along the East Fork of the Trinity River was called Lazy Neck<sup>6</sup>. The writer did not know where the name came from. There are several references to Lazy Neck in the early Collin County newspapers.

In 1852 a caravan of fifteen ox-drawn wagons carrying twelve families left McNairy County, Tennessee for Texas. Twenty-eight days later they arrived in McKinney, the county seat of Collin County.<sup>7</sup> Most of the members of the wagon train settled in the south-central part of Collin County. Among the settlers were Mark L. Morris, Leroy Farmer and A. H. Burns. Morris moved about 13 miles southeast of McKinney on January 1, 1853 and received 317 acres of land from the state of Texas on June 22, 1858.<sup>8</sup> A few years after this original group, William Spurgeon settled about a mile south of the Morris survey. James Gallagher came to the area in 1856 and purchased the eastern half of the Morris survey, 157 acres, on September 22, 1856,<sup>9</sup> as well as several hundred more acres from other land owners in the area, totaling 553 acres.<sup>10</sup> He shared the land with his brother and three sisters. Gallagher returned to New Orleans to escort his family to his newly purchased property. The return trip took nine months by boat and ox cart.

In 1856 Collin County passed an ordinance that all landowners must donate three days of

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<sup>6</sup> W. S. Adair, *Dallas Morning News*, "Lazy Neck Was Misnomer, Old Dallasite Says," April 1, 1928, p 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ethel Burch, WYLIE NEWS, "Historical Sketches," May 27, 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. M, p 449.

<sup>9</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. J, p 429. The interesting thing about this is that Gallagher purchased almost half of the Morris survey before Morris had been issued title to it by the state of Texas.

<sup>10</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. J, p. 420; Vol. J, p. 620; Vol. K, p. 358.

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labor to construct roads in the county. The property owners could petition to have a road pass by their houses. The construction was divided into roughly five-mile segments. One road, the McKinney-Kaufman County Road,<sup>11</sup> connected McKinney with the Wills Ferry-Witts Mill Road.<sup>12</sup> The first leg of the McKinney-Kaufman County Road roughly followed present-day FM1378 to Fitzhugh Mill in Lucas. The second leg of the construction stopped “at a point across from the Morris house.” The third leg ran east-west for a mile or so before turning south to join the Wills Ferry Road near present-day Wylie. M. L. Morris was a construction worker on the second leg of the road. The third leg workers included William Spurgin and William Lee, who operated the ferry across the East Fork of the Trinity River southeast of present-day Wylie.<sup>13</sup>

During the Civil War most of the local men joined Capt. Gabriel H. Fitzhugh’s Company, the 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Brigade of Texas Cavalry Volunteers. Mark L Morris was 2<sup>nd</sup> Sergeant; John Spurgon was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sergeant. James and John Gallagher and James Neilon were privates.<sup>14</sup>

Occupations listed in the U. S. 1870 Census for St. Paul included cabinet maker, wagon maker, teamster, miller, cooper, stock raiser, wood chopper, Roman Catholic priest and school teacher. The predominant occupations were farmer and farm laborer.<sup>15</sup> In St. Paul in the 1880 census two physicians are listed: Turus O’Brien, who was a boarder, and Wm. H. Clement, who was a land owner.<sup>16</sup>

A general store was started some time before 1880. It was located on the north side of

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<sup>11</sup> Present-day Rockwall County was part of Kaufman County in 1856.

<sup>12</sup> The Wills Ferry-Witts Mill Road was an east-west road across the southern part of Collin County. Wills Ferry was across the East Fork of the Trinity River southeast of Wylie. Witts Mill was Trinity Mills in the Addison area of Dallas County.

<sup>13</sup> Joy Gough, EARLY COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS, ROADS:ROUTES AND BUILDERS, “McKinney-Kaufman County Road, p. 7, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> J. Lee Stambaugh, A HISTORY OF COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS, “Purely Personal,” Section E, p 262-63. Neilon is spelled Kneeland.

<sup>15</sup> 1870 U. S. Census, Precinct 5, p. 50-57.

<sup>16</sup> 1880 U. S. Census, Precinct 5, ED 26, p 23.

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present-day Parker Road about 50 yards west of the intersection with Aztec Trail. At one time A. H. Burns was proprietor of the store.<sup>17</sup> The St. Paul post office was located in the back of the general store. The post office was established on May 12, 1876 with W. E. Marriott as postmaster. G. W. Miller became postmaster on July 12, 1876 and John A. Walden on April 1, 1879. John A. Walden's occupation in the 1880 U. S. census is listed as a merchant.<sup>18</sup> The post office was discontinued on August 17, 1886, with the mail being sent to Maxwell.<sup>19</sup> It was re-established on January 25, 1887, with Monroe Lang as postmaster. John A. Walden became the postmaster again on February 12, 1889. Edgar M. Hughes became postmaster on June 26, 1893. This post office was discontinued on March 20, 1894, with the mail being sent to Lucas. A third post office was established on March 2, 1899 with Edward Bellmyre as postmaster.<sup>20</sup> Eugene B. Marchant became the postmaster on June 15, 1900, the day the 1900 census was taken in the area.<sup>21</sup> Because the mail was just "dumped" at the store by the mail carrier, this post office became known as Dump.<sup>22</sup> To this day, local residents call the area Dump. The Dump post office was discontinued on November 30, 1901, with the mail sent to Allen.<sup>23</sup>

Eugene, called Gene, Marchant operated the general store around 1900. The cotton gin and blacksmith shop in St. Paul were located north of the store and were operated by Gene Marchant and Frank Marchant.<sup>24</sup> The ginned cotton was taken elsewhere for further processing. In August of 1903 C. I. Marriott, a farmer in the Clear Lake community, brought the first bale of

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<sup>17</sup> Frank X. Tolbert, *Dallas Morning News*, "Tolbert's Texas: City of Dump Has 'Haunted House,'" April 14, 1962, p 1.

<sup>18</sup> 1880 U. S. Census, Precinct 5, ED 26, family 216, p 22.

<sup>19</sup> The Maxwell community was located in southeast present-day Murphy.

<sup>20</sup> This post office is the only post office that was referred to as Dump.

<sup>21</sup> 1900 U. S. Census, Precinct 5 (Wylie township), ED 17, Sheet 15, family 259.

<sup>22</sup> There are variations of the story about how the community got the name Dump. They all involve the post office.

<sup>23</sup> Stambaugh, p 237 and 244.

<sup>24</sup> Beb Fulkerson, WYLIE AREA HERITAGE, "Spurgin, Bernard & Annie Ernestine," page 168.

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cotton for the season to McKinney. The cotton had been ginned in Dump (St. Paul). He received 17 1/2 cents per pound for the cotton from the McKinney Board of Trade for having the first bail of the season. His bale weighed 390 pounds and he received \$68.25. The second bale sold for 15 cents a pound.<sup>25</sup> After Gene Marchant left the area around 1910, the store was operated by Joe Spurgin. Later the gin burned and the store was closed.<sup>26</sup>

A phone line was installed from Lucas to St. Paul in 1901.<sup>27</sup> Electricity did not reach St. Paul for many more years.

In 1886 the Gulf Colorado Santa Fe Railway was expanding its service from Fort Worth to Paris. It passed through Collin County about 4 miles south of St. Paul. The right-of-way agent, Col. W. D. Wylie, persuaded the residents of the early community of Nickelville to name their town after him and the city of Wylie was born. In 1888 the St. Louis Southwestern Railway, otherwise known as the Cottonbelt, laid track through Wylie connecting Plano with Greenville.<sup>28</sup> While Wylie became a thriving town with two railroads, the commercial development of St. Paul ceased.

At one time St. Paul had two churches, a Methodist one and a Catholic one.

Early settlers Mark L. Morris and Will Spurgeon were active in forming the Methodist church at St. Paul. They held Methodist services in their homes as early as 1856. The Spurgin home became known as Spurgin Chapel. Either Morris or Spurgin usually led the services. The North Texas Methodist Conference had not yet been formed and they did not have a preacher. In August of 1856, at the Cado Quarterly Meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Arkansas

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<sup>25</sup> *The Democrat* (McKinney), "He Lost the First Prize-Brought by C. I. Marriott," August 27, 1903, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Capt. Roy Hall, *The Examiner* (McKinney), "Once Upon a Time – St. Paul," May 9, 1968.

<sup>27</sup> *The Democrat* (McKinney), "Collin County Gleanings: Lucas," June 27, 1901.

<sup>28</sup> Joy Gough, HEAR THAT LONESOME WHISTLE BLOW, p. 5 & 6.

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 Conference, Texas Mission District, Millwood<sup>29</sup> Mission, M. L. Morris, Samuel Spurgeon and  
 James Spurgeon were appointed as the Board of Trustees for the lease for the Camp Creek  
 Meeting Ground.<sup>30</sup>

After the school building was constructed in 1873, the Methodist Church met in it. The  
 congregation called itself Liberty Chapel. Other denominations shared the building also. The  
 building was made of logs with one room and a dirt floor. Since there was no electricity, night-  
 time revivals were scheduled during the full moon.

There were several churches named Liberty in Collin County in the late 1880s.<sup>31</sup> The area  
 became known as St. Paul after the St. Paul Catholic Church was established. At some point the  
 Methodist church took the name of St. Paul Methodist. In 1897 A. J. Buchanan and his wife sold  
 for \$75 to the trustees of the St. Paul M. E. Church, South a lot containing 2650 square yards, a  
 little over 1/2 acre.<sup>32</sup> The new church building was constructed next to the school, about 100  
 yards west of the store. A revised roll of the members of the St. Paul Methodist Episcopal  
 Church, South for the years 1893-1901 shows a membership of 168.<sup>33</sup> The church building blew  
 down in 1925. The men of the community worked together to construct a new one.<sup>34</sup> The  
 highlight of the week for many people was the Sunday evening singing at St. Paul Methodist  
 Church. Mrs. John Seeley was the pianist and several area families had talented singers. A brush

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<sup>29</sup>The Millwood community and the Millwood Cemetery have a historical marker.

<sup>30</sup>Ethel Burch, August 19, 1971; Collin County Deed Records, Vol. I, p. 511. Camp Creek runs through  
 Millwood, which is located on the east side of the East Fork of the Trinity River, south of the present-day  
 community of Lavon.

<sup>31</sup> Collin County Liberty Churches included Farmersville, Plano, Weston, and Mantua, and maybe others.  
 References to another camp meeting sponsored by the Liberty Chapel were actually referring to the  
 Liberty Church at Weston.

<sup>32</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. 80, p. 73.

<sup>33</sup> Rhea Gran Downing, WYLIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, WYLIE, TEXAS, "Pioneer  
 Methodists in Texas."

<sup>34</sup> Rhea Gran Downing, "Report for Church Services at Wylie United Methodist Church, October 21,  
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arbor was built east of the building for services during the summer months.<sup>35</sup>

In 1931 St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church, South was part of the McKinney District, Wylie Circuit, which included Wylie, St. Paul, Pleasant Valley, and Rowlett. The presiding elders were paid \$11 and the preacher was paid \$89.<sup>36</sup> In 1938, the Superintendent of the Sunday School was A. R. Bare. The Sunday School met weekly with an attendance of about 30. The minister was Rev. A. C. Lawton of Wylie, who preached on the first and third Sunday afternoons of every month in St. Paul.<sup>37</sup> In 1943 Lavon was added to the Wylie Circuit, making five churches in the circuit. The membership was 41 with 32 active. The value of the building and equipment was \$2000.<sup>38</sup> In 1944 the Wylie Methodist Church had its own minister and the St. Paul Methodist Church is not listed as being on any circuit.<sup>39</sup> In 1946 the St. Paul Methodist Church congregation merged with the Wylie Methodist Church and the church building was moved to Wylie to serve as an annex to the Wylie Methodist Church. It was used for Sunday School classes, and for special functions. An effort was made to save the old building and have it restored. That effort failed and the St. Paul Methodist Church building was torn down in 1982.<sup>40</sup>

The second church in St. Paul was a Catholic church.

In 1857 a group of Irish immigrants settled in this area of Collin County. These included

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, WYLIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, WYLIE, TEXAS, "Interviews with Mrs. Verna McDonald Douglas."

<sup>36</sup> R. G. Mood, secretary, MINUTES OF THE SIXTY-FIFTH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, October 29-November 1, 1931.

<sup>37</sup> Mrs. O. S. Scott, *Daily Courier Gazette* (McKinney), "Dump Jottings," April 22, 1938.

<sup>38</sup> Cicero B. Fielder, Secretary, JOURNAL OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, October 26-29, 1943, p. 54 and "Statistical Table No. 1."

<sup>39</sup> Cicero Fielder, Secretary, JOURNAL OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, October 24-27, 1944, "Statistical Table No. 1-A."

<sup>40</sup> Rhea Gran Downing "Pioneer Methodists in Texas."



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the Gallaghers, Neilons, and Millers, who were all related by marriage. Almost immediately they started holding Catholic services and teaching Catechism in their homes. They encouraged other Irish Catholics to move to the area.

The St. Paul Catholic Church in the St. Paul community was established as a mission of the Diocese of Galveston in 1856. Rev. Thomas Hennessy first traveled to St. Paul in the 1860s to minister to this early mission church.<sup>41</sup> He encouraged the local Catholics to apply to the Galveston Diocese for a church. The Galveston Diocese gave the Collin County church and parish the name St. Paul. This was the first Catholic Church in Collin or Dallas County. Some say it was the first Catholic Church north of San Antonio.

In the fall of 1869 the head of the Galveston Diocese, Bishop Claude Marc Dubuis,<sup>42</sup> came to Collin County to purchase land for a church and for a cemetery. He also purchased land for the first school in the St. Paul area. On October 29, 1869 A. H. and Lucinda Burns sold 1/2 acre of land for \$5 to the Galveston Diocese.<sup>43</sup>

On November 27, 1869, James and Sarah Gallagher Neilon sold 2 acres of land to the Galveston Diocese for \$25.<sup>44</sup> On the same day, James Gallagher and his wife Emily sold 2 acres of land for \$10 to the Galveston Diocese to be used as a cemetery.<sup>45</sup> Witnesses to these deeds were James Kneeland and Rev. Joseph Martinieri, who was assigned as priest to the St. Paul Catholic Church in 1868.

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<sup>41</sup> ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH, "A History of Our Parish," 2010 edition, p 21. Ibid, Ethel Burch, "Our Spiritual Heritage," August 26, 1971.

<sup>42</sup> Several sources transpose the 'i' and 'u' and spell his name Dubius or Doubius or Dubious. Information on him can be found at: <http://www.uiw.edu/housing/rh-dubuis.html>. A dormitory is named for him at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas.

<sup>43</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. T, p. 170.

<sup>44</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. T, p. 165. The name is spelled Kneeland on all of the early deed records.

<sup>45</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. T, p. 169.

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The church property was located in the northwest corner of the Orpha Shelby survey and the northeast corner of the A. H. Burns survey<sup>46</sup> with the northern boundary present-day St. Paul Road. The church property was 127 yards wide and 100 yards long. On this land was built a church and a school. In later years it included a residence for the priest. Lumber was hauled from Jefferson to construct the buildings.

In 1871 the first church building was destroyed in a storm. It was rebuilt by local residents. When this building was completed, it was the first church building in this area of Collin County, and the first Catholic Church in North Texas.<sup>47</sup> The first baptism listed in Baptismal Register was in 1876.<sup>48</sup> The church building burned twice and was rebuilt each time. The church had a steeple, a belfry and a bell that is dated 1876. The bell was rung on Sunday mornings.

In the 1870 U. S. Census for Collin County, Joseph Martiniere, Catholic priest, is living with the James and Sarah Gallagher Neilon family.<sup>49</sup> Martiniere was a circuit preacher for Dallas and used St. Paul as his mission station. He conducted services in homes in the Dallas area.<sup>50</sup> In the 1880 U. S. Census for the county, another Catholic priest, Anthony Des Fresche, was living with the Neilon family.<sup>51</sup> Several different priests served the St. Paul church, most of them for only a couple of years. The longest tenure was five years.<sup>52</sup>

Catholic churches were new to local Protestants and residents from McKinney, Dallas,

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<sup>46</sup> Collin County Plat Maps, Shelby Survey, Abstract #800 and A. H. Burns Survey, Abstract #0064.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, Ethel Burch, "Our Spiritual Heritage," August 26, 1971.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, "A History of Our Parish.

<sup>49</sup> In the 1870 Census, the name is spelled "Kneeland." Precinct 5, p. 55, family 330.

<sup>50</sup> St. Paul Diocese web site, "Former Bishops." [http://www.cathdal.org/pages/Former\\_Bishops](http://www.cathdal.org/pages/Former_Bishops)

<sup>51</sup> 1880 U. S. Census, Precinct 5, ED 26, p 23, family 223.

<sup>52</sup> Brenda Kellow, <http://www.collincountyhistory.com/st-paul-st-paul.html>, "St. Paul Catholic Cemetery and Church," a list of priests at St. Paul Catholic Church.

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and Rockwall attended services at St. Paul on religious holidays to witness the services.<sup>53</sup>

The St. Anthony Catholic Church was established in Wylie a few years after the railroad came through, around 1890. It was established as a mission in 1900.<sup>54</sup> The St. Paul and St. Anthony Churches co-existed for several years with the priests assigned to both churches. In 1890 the St. Paul Diocese in Dallas was established by Pope Leo XIII.<sup>55</sup>

In 1902 Rev. James E. Malone was assigned as the priest for the St. Paul and St. Anthony churches. He organized an “extensive” church fair and bazaar to be held at the church in St. Paul on October 18<sup>th</sup> of that year to raise money to put a new floor in the church building and to improve the pastoral residence. Names of the early members of the church as listed in the newspaper article included James Neilon, Sr. and James and John Gallagher. The fair included dinner and supper prepared by the ladies of the church and an evening concert given by Dallas, Fort Worth and local talent.<sup>56</sup>

In 1909 the St. Paul church was listed as a mission of the St. Anthony Church.<sup>57</sup> Soon after that the St. Paul congregation decided to close its church and move to St. Anthony in Wylie. All of the records of the St. Paul Catholic Church are preserved at the St. Paul Diocese offices in Dallas, Texas. In 1916 Bishop Lynch of the Dallas Diocese gave permission to remove the St. Paul church and school buildings.<sup>58</sup> When the St. Paul Catholic Church closed, the bell was moved to the St. Anthony church in Wylie. Most of its furnishings were sent to Our Lady of

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<sup>53</sup> W. S. Adair, *Dallas Morning News*, “Dallas Drew on Population of Lazy Neck,” July 22, 1927.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, “A History of Our Parish.”

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, St. Paul Diocese web site. It was the third diocese in Texas. The San Antonio Diocese was established in 1874.

<sup>56</sup> *The Democrat* (McKinney) “Old Catholic Land-Mark, St. Paul Church near Wylie,” October 23, 1902.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, “A History of Our Parish.”

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, “A History of Our Parish.”

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Guadalupe Catholic Church in Dallas.<sup>59</sup>

The lumber from the church and school were sold to St. Paul resident, Walter Bellmyre, who used it to build a house. The wood was so dense that a tack could not be hammered into it. Therefore, there were no pictures hung on the walls and there was no wallpaper. Religious pictures were painted on the walls.<sup>60</sup>

The third property that Bishop Dubuis purchased in 1869 was 2 acres of land for a cemetery from Emily Gallagher, wife of James Gallagher.<sup>61</sup> The St. Paul Catholic Cemetery is the only Catholic cemetery in Collin County.<sup>62</sup> The earliest marked grave in the cemetery is that of Monica Gallagher, who died on May 13, 1870. Buried in this cemetery are Charles Stibbens, the only veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto buried in Collin County, and Rev. R. F. Neale, the only priest of the St. Paul Catholic Church buried in the cemetery.<sup>63</sup> The cemetery contains over 300 burials and is still active.<sup>64</sup> It is maintained by the St. Anthony Catholic Church in Wylie.

For a while the St. Paul community had two schools, one at the Catholic Church and the Morris School that shared the building with the Methodist church. In 1871 the State of Texas passed a law directing all county commissioners to divide their counties into school districts of not less than nine square miles each.<sup>65</sup> The school district for the St. Paul area was Morris #10/St. Paul #10.

The St. Paul area probably had schools many years before this time because by 1871 several of the early families had lived in the area for close to fifteen years. In the 1870 U. S.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, "A History of Our Parish."

<sup>60</sup> Personal interview, Mrs. Rita Williams, daughter of Walter Bellmeyer September 17, 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. T, p. 169.

<sup>62</sup> Joy Gough and Ned Hoover, CEMETERIES OF COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS.

<sup>63</sup> Brenda Kellow, "St. Paul Catholic Cemetery."

<sup>64</sup> For a complete listing of the burials, go to <http://files.usgwarchives.net/tx/collin/cemeteries/stpaul1.txt>

<sup>65</sup> Ethel Burch, March 25, 1971.

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Census for Collin County, John and Elizabeth Skelton had a school teacher living in their house, Martin Depust.<sup>66</sup> Eli Hogge also listed his occupation as school teacher in the 1870 census.<sup>67</sup>

In 1869 land was sold to the Catholic Diocese in Galveston for a church building and a school. The school was public and free. The two-story school building was built by the community with the upper floor was used by the Ancient Order of Hibernians.<sup>68</sup> The Order of Hibernians is an organization for Irish Catholics and the St. Paul branch may have been the first one in Texas. The Order is still active in the United States today.

One of the teachers at the Catholic school was an Oxonian named Waldermar M. Malcolmson.<sup>69</sup> Waldermar Malcolmson purchased one acre of land in St. Paul from Dr. Clements in 1879.<sup>70</sup> His family is listed in the 1880 census for St. Paul.<sup>71</sup> He sold the property in 1882.<sup>72</sup> By 1884 he had moved his family to Dallas and opened a private school in that city called Central Academy.<sup>73</sup>

On January 2, 1873 Mark L. Morris and Elizabeth Skelton sold 1/2 acre of land for \$1.00 to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Texas to be used by the school district where the land is located.<sup>74</sup> This land was used for the Morris School. The school building had one room and a dirt floor, and dimensions about 16 feet x 22 feet. It had 3 rows of benches made of split logs for about fifty students. The shingles were made from oak blocks and were 16 inches

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<sup>66</sup> 1870 U. S. Census, Collin County, Precinct 5, Family 326, p 54.

<sup>67</sup> 1870 U. S. Census, Collin County, Precinct 5, Family 311, p 51.

<sup>68</sup> Ethel Burch, "The Catholic Church," August 26, 1971.

<sup>69</sup> W. S. Adair, *Dallas Morning News*, "Dallas Drew on Population of Lazy Neck," July 22, 1927, p 8, accessed through newsbank.com.

<sup>70</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. 11, p. 505.

<sup>71</sup> 1880 U. S. Census, Precinct 5, ED 26, family 220.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, Deed Records, Vol. 16, p. 380.

<sup>73</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, "Prof. Malcolmson's School," advertisement, December 3, 1886, p 5.

<sup>74</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. V, p. 446.

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long. It was heated by a large fire place on the east end of the building.<sup>75</sup> Five small glass windows were hung with rawhide hinges. The door was also made of rawhide, hairy side out, and was attached at the top. It had to be lifted to enter the building. Because of the rawhide door, the school was locally known as Rawhide School. The building was used for church services by different denominations on Sundays.<sup>76</sup>

At some point the St. Paul and Morris schools combined because the surrounding community was not large enough to support two separate schools.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1884, Mark L. Morris, Sr. and his children sold 105 square rods of land for \$1 and for “the interest they felt in the rising generation and the education of the children of the St. Paul School District” to Collin County Judge Goodner for public free school purposes.<sup>77</sup> The school was located northwest of the general store.

Some of the teachers at the Morris School were John F. McCullough in 1899-1900,<sup>78</sup> Miss Donnie Haley in 1902,<sup>79</sup> Prof. Arthur England and Prof. H. M. Cosby in 1903,<sup>80</sup> Miss Etta Horn in 1922,<sup>81</sup> Mrs. Marie Moss, Gerald Giles, and Will Killian.<sup>82</sup>

On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1935, Watson McCreary and his wife sold 1/2 acre of land to the trustees of the Morris School District.<sup>83</sup> The new school was a three-teacher school. In 1938 Prof. Will Killian was the principal with Prof. Gerald Giles as the intermediate school teacher and a coach and Mrs. Marie Moss as the primary school teacher. She also coached girls’

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, Ethel Burch, “Our Spiritual Heritage,” September 2, 1971.

<sup>76</sup> Rhea Gran Downing, WYLIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, “Pioneer Methodists in Texas, 1994.

<sup>77</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. 25, p. 317, 318.

<sup>78</sup> Frank X. Tolbert, *Dallas Morning News*, “Tolbert’s Texas:City of Dump Has ‘Haunted House,’” April 14, 1962.

<sup>79</sup> *Weekly Democrat Gazette* (McKinney), January 30, 1902.

<sup>80</sup> *The Democrat*, “Lucas,” January 8, 1903.

<sup>81</sup> *The Examiner* (McKinney), December 28, 1922, p 1.

<sup>82</sup> Mrs. O. S. Scott, *Daily Courier Gazette*, “Dump Jottings,” April 22, 1938.

<sup>83</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. 302, p 1.

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softball. The school teams played other area schools in sports. One newspaper article states that the Clear Lake Ringers played Dump Monday night and both teams were victorious.<sup>84</sup> The enrollment was between 75 and 80 students. The Board of Trustees consisted of J. O Sealy, A. R. Bare, and Raymond Smith. There was a four-room teacherage located near the school that was used by Prof. Killian's family.<sup>85</sup> The school building was used as a polling place.

On March 31, 1945 the trustees of the Morris School District #10 sold the McCreary 1/2 acre mentioned above to W. H. Collinsworth.<sup>86</sup> The Morris School District merged with the Wylie School District. The old school house was used as a residence for a number of years before it was demolished.

By 1950, St. Paul had lost both of its schools and both of its churches.

The East Fork of the Trinity River and its tributaries were notorious for flooding. In 1948 construction was started on a flood control dam on the East Fork of the Trinity River about two miles southeast of St. Paul. The dam created Lake Lavon and was completed in 1953.<sup>87</sup> The land along the lake belongs to the U. S. Corps of Engineers. The Collin Park Marina is at St. Paul. A horse trail has been built along the western edge of Lake Lavon that passes by St. Paul. The North Texas Municipal Water District was established in 1957, making Lake Lavon the water source for many of the surrounding communities and for much of Collin County.

St. Paul was incorporated in 1971 with an original population of 202 and 66 voters. The town government consists of a mayor and five council members. A Volunteer Fire Department was started in the 1980s. Firefighting equipment was purchased from the old town of Renner.

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<sup>84</sup> *Democrat Gazette*, February 8, 1934.

<sup>85</sup> Mrs. O. S. Scott, *Daily Courier Gazette* (McKinney), "Dump Jottings," April 22, 1938.

<sup>86</sup> Collin County Deed Records, Vol. 353, p 145.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, Stambaugh, "Economic Development," p 122. Lake Ray Hubbard in Dallas and Rockwall Counties was also created by a dam on the East Fork of the Trinity River.

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The Fire Department has been discontinued and St. Paul Town Hall uses the old building. Wylie Northeast Special Utility District was started in 1964 and provides the water to the town.

Residents of St. Paul have voted to have the town stay mostly rural with large lots. The Collin County Sheriff's Department provides police protection and the Wylie Fire Department provides fire and emergency services. The town's businesses include a few eateries, a gas station, and a few other shops. Today there is little to no farming in this old farming community. Some residents raise cattle, horses and other livestock. The population of the town in 2012 is over 1000.<sup>88</sup>

### **Significance**

St. Paul played a significant part in the early development of south-central Collin County. The early settlers considered religion and education to be a vital part of new their life in Texas. The Methodist church and the Catholic church were started as soon as the settlers moved to the area. Parts of these early churches are still in existence in the Wylie churches that they merged with. Schools were so important that this little community had two public schools for a while. St. Paul was very influential in the growth and development of south-central Collin County and in the development of Wylie. The early settlers would be amazed that their little farming community has grown to such a large population and they would be proud that parts of the early institutions that they started are still in existence.

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<sup>88</sup> City of St. Paul website, <http://stpaultexas.us/History/History.htm>



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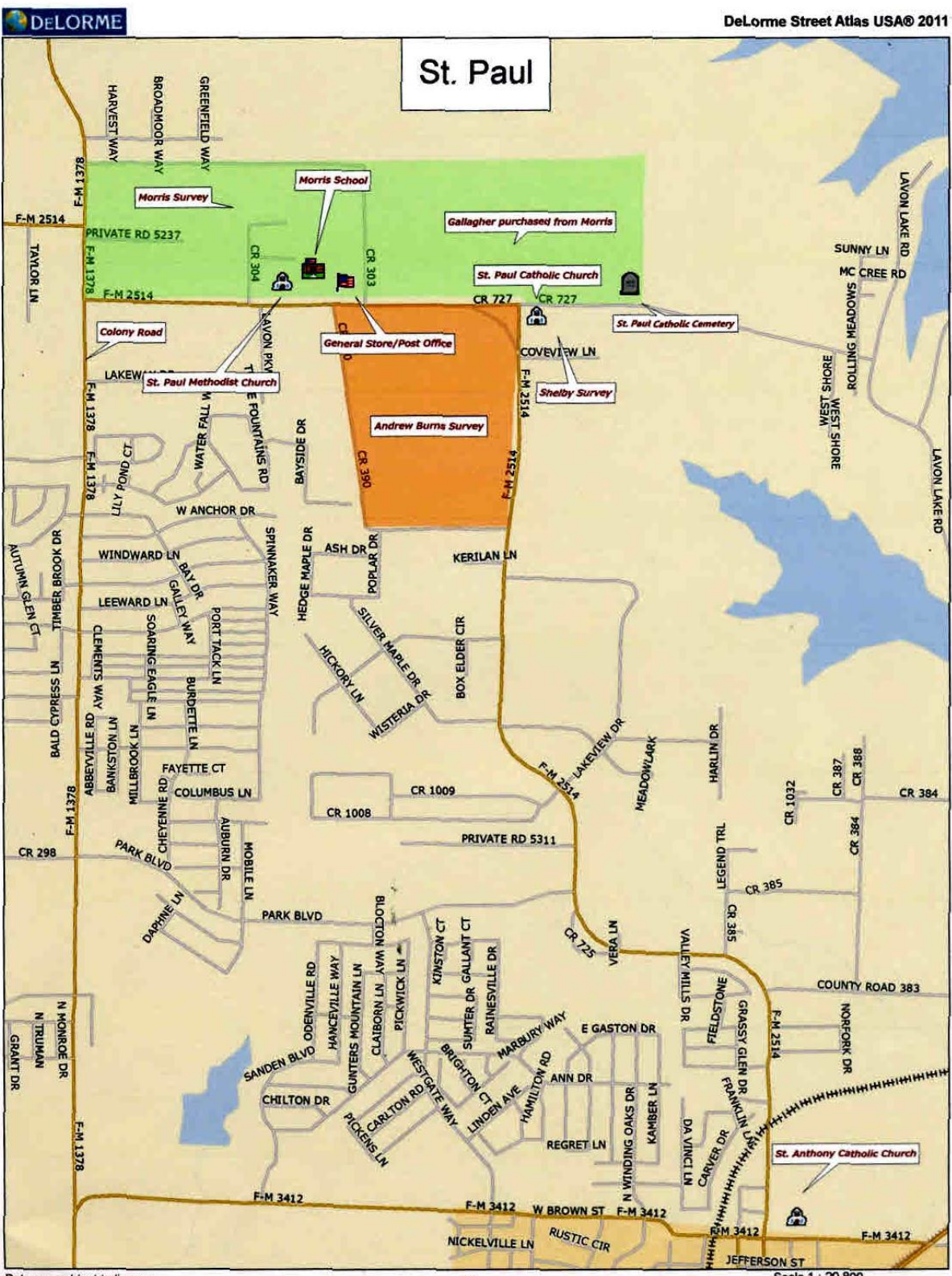
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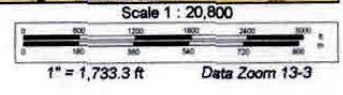
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St. Paul Catholic Church  
photo from St. Paul diocese  
archives, courtesy of Brenda  
Kellow



photo from WYLIE AREA HERITAGE

St. Paul Methodist Church



Morris School about 1914-15  
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