



Courtesy photo
Patriarch R.W.
Carpenter

DEEP ROOTS

The Carpenters trace their local lineage
to a man everybody called 'Captain'



Courtesy photo
Elizabeth
Carpenter



The Dallas Morning News: Michael Malvey

At the historic Carpenter home on East 16th Street are (from left, on porch) Clay and Clint Haggard and (from left) Carmen Carpenter Haggard, John Ingram, Doris Thompson and Jim Ingram. From their ranch-

ing roots in Collin County, the descendants of R.W. Carpenter have entered professions from medicine to the judiciary and have served in public offices, including the City Council and school board.

By Sherry Jacobson
Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

When the Civil War came in 1861, it seemed that every man in Texas was willing to enlist in the Confederate army.

Robert Washington Carpenter, a 28-year-old Plano rancher, jumped into the fray, organizing Collin County's own cavalry troop in McKinney. It served mainly

FIRST FAMILIES: THE CARPENTERS

in lesser-known skirmishes in Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. The men elected Mr. Carpenter their captain, a title he would carry for the rest of his life.

"Grandfather Carpenter was a God-fearing man and faithful church member; that is, until Yankees were mentioned," wrote his grandson Roy F. Carpenter in a 1988 recollection of the Civil War years. The Carpenter family, he wrote, has "handed down enough quotations from the Captain's war years to start the Civil War all over again, should I be foolish enough to repeat them."

Southern men such as R.W. Carpenter had come west to Texas to find their fortunes in the decades before the Civil War, but they did not leave the South.

At 19, an age when young men today leave home for college, Mr. Carpenter boarded a stagecoach in his native Kentucky and headed for a place that was a foreign country to most Americans.

The year was 1852, and his destination



Courtesy photo

An 1890 photo shows the Carpenter home, which included the original 20-square-foot building of hand-hewn lumber.

was an obscure stop in northern Texas called Plano. With \$900 inherited from his father, Mr. Carpenter was on his own.

But he was not prepared for what he would find there, his relatives say.

"When he rode out along a beautiful, meandering creek, Spring Creek, as far as the eye could see were miles and miles of grass that reached the stirrups of his saddle," wrote Russell B. Carpenter, a

great-grandson who became the family's historian. "Here was land as few had ever seen, a land that every foot was till-able as it could be plowed to the very beds of the stream."

R.W. Carpenter would tell his grandchildren that the land in Plano was the most beautiful he had ever seen — other than the eroded clay hills of Kentucky. Please see CARPENTER on Page 6R.

TIME LINE: 1861-1880

1861	1863	1865	1868	1870	1872
The Civil War begins with an attack on Fort Sumter in South Carolina; a Union blockade of the Texas coast causes shortages of medical supplies, paper, coffee, tea and salt.	The Emancipation Proclamation takes effect.	The Civil War ends.	The Carpenters end their cattle drives after their eldest son is captured by American Indians in northern Oklahoma.	Texas land is valued at \$2.62 an acre, compared with the national average of \$18.26 an acre.	The Houston and Texas Central Railroad comes to Plano bringing settlers and needed labor.

Carpenters trace lineage to a man called 'Captain'

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He purchased 320 acres at 50 cents an acre, transported his young bride, Elizabeth Mathews Carpenter, to Texas and set up a homestead with the help of a pair of oxen and two slaves.

Unlike many of their farming neighbors, the Carpenters primarily raised cattle: huge, half-wild longhorn specimens that were fattened on the buffalo grass that grew wild and tall enough to hide the steers.

The Carpenters settled into prairie life, building a 20-square-foot home, with an adjoining kitchen, that would soon accommodate seven sons. Their cattle, which roamed freely on the fence-less prairie, were equally abundant.

"Each year, great roundups were held and every family participated," wrote two Carpenter grandsons in a 100-year history of the family assembled in 1952. "The calves were branded with the brands of the cows they followed as each settler had his special brand. Community drives were held and the cattle went up the Chisholm and Shawnee trails in herds of thousands into St. Louis, where a 4-year-old steer sold for \$10."

But the War Between the States changed everything in the thriving little community that Plano had become.

A maverick county

Though most Texans supported the Confederacy, most Collin County residents stood apart. When given the chance to vote on secession in 1861, a majority of the county's voters opposed Texas' plan to join the Confederate States.

Members of the Texas Legislature had cast a decisive 171-6 vote in favor of secession. During their vote, the loudest and most threatening display of disapproval came when Rep. James W. Throckmorton, a McKinney lawyer, proclaimed that he was "unwary by the wild spirit of revolution" and cast the second negative vote against secession.

Though Texas was far removed from most of the major battlefields of the war, the state had to provide troops, defend the Gulf Coast against federal attack, stamp out internal subversion and protect frontier communities from Indians and renegades.

Texas as the Confederacy's largest cotton-producing state, and there was much talk among Union commanders of invading the state to

ABOUT THIS SERIES

First Families tells the stories of five Plano families who have had a lasting impact.

□ **Tuesday: THE ROUTHs** — Jacob Routh and his family arrived in 1851 and purchased almost 1,000 acres of prairie land straddling what would become Plano and Richardson.

■ **Wednesday: THE CARPENTERS** — The Civil War and the emancipation of slaves brought upheaval to Collin County's farms, but the arrival of barbed wire and railroads revived farmers' livelihood.

□ **Thursday: THE DRAKES** — The descendants of former slave Andy Drake are believed to be among the oldest and largest black families in Plano. In 1884, his children helped found Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church.

□ **Friday: THE VINESES** — Between 1870 and 1962, when the patriarch's last great-grandson graduated from Plano High School, the Vines name was synonymous with hard work and family.

□ **Saturday: THE HAGGARDS** — Legacy Park and the Dallas North Tollway, symbols of Plano's explosive growth, both sit on land that once belonged to the Haggards, who arrived from Kentucky in 1856.

ensure the supply for Union troops. A blockade of the Texas coast began in 1861. Within months, it had seriously curtailed commerce in paper, tea, coffee and salt. Medical supplies also were impossible to obtain in most places.

But these hardships were nothing compared to the life of Texas soldiers sent to fight for the Confederacy. In letters home, soldiers complained not only of deadly battles but of the illness and deprivation that haunted the troops.

"The Colonel has left us here without money or supplies and if it were not for the kindness of the ladies here we would have no way to keep on," wrote James White Campbell to his uncle Jacob Routh

of Plano.

Another letter from Mr. Campbell in 1862 asked for help in replenishing his supplies at Camp Hope, Ark. "I wish you would send a sack of flour in your next package," he wrote. "I expect I will be needing some more clothes before winter: pants, shirts, shoes and hat. Some of our boys are barefooted."

Over the four long years of the war, the farms and ranches in Collin County struggled without enough hands to do the work. When the men returned in 1865, they found fields that had gone fallow and cattle that had gone wild.

Uncounted longhorns were scattered over the Texas plains, providing settlers with the opportunity for acquiring ready cash by driving the unclaimed herds to market. It was estimated that as early as the spring of 1866, between 200,000 and 260,000 head of cattle crossed the Red River, going north.

Changing times

The Carpenters' home life changed radically after the war. Mrs. Carpenter — known as a hard-working homemaker who spun her own material and sewed the family clothes — had depended on three slaves to get the chores done. In an entry in her journal dated Aug. 5, 1866, Mrs. Carpenter, who was obviously ill, complained about the loss of help from her former slaves.

Life on the ranch changed as well. Although the settlers had lived in peace with the neighboring Indian tribes, there were periodic problems on the cattle drives north.

On a drive through northern Oklahoma in 1868, Mr. Carpenter's eldest son, Will, was captured by Indians who were angry because settlers had taken their cattle. Forty head of cattle were pierced by arrows, most of the horses were stolen and the remaining herd was stampeded. Although Will Carpenter returned unhurt, the incident signaled the end of cattle drives for the family.

From then on, the Carpenters would trade a head of cattle for three acres of land in Collin County rather than risk another drive to St. Louis. R.W. Carpenter freely admitted that he feared for the lives of his sons.

The Carpenters' move into farming proved prophetic. With land fenced by barbed wire, the price skyrocketed to \$20 an acre throughout the county. And the arrival of the Houston & Texas

MILIE:
ENTERS

1873	Plano, Weston and Farmersville are allowed to incorporate; Plano elects a mayor, five aldermen and a constable; the Carpenter Family helps establish the First Christian Church of Plano.	1874	Plano's population passes 500.	1876	The Carpenter family helps build Bethany Church, school and cemetery; the United States awards a patent to Alexander Graham Bell for the telephone.	1879	Thomas Edison invents the light bulb.	1880	A tornado destroys several buildings in Plano, including the Methodist church.
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The Dallas Morning News



E. A. Carpenter Pharmacy in 1898 or 1899

Courtesy photo

Among the businesses run by members of the Carpenter family was this pharmacy, shown in 1898 or 1899, about the time R.W.

Carpenter died. In the prosperous years after the Civil War, the family helped establish churches and schools.

NAMED FOR THE CARPENTERS

- **Carpenter House**, 1211 E. 16th St. The 5,612-square-foot Queen Anne Victorian home was commissioned in 1898 by Col. Henry Overacre, a lumber dealer. He lived in it 20 years; then it was bought by G.E. Carpenter. His family resided there for more than 40 years, until it was sold in 1958 to settle an estate. One of the few Plano homes to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, it now houses a wedding and event business.
- **Carpenter Middle School**, 1501 Cross Bend Road. The school opened in 1978.
- **Carpenter Park**, 6701 Coit Road. The 107-acre park is home to the city's Carpenter Park Recreation Center.



The Dallas Morning News: Michael Mulvey

A sign at Carpenter Park

Central Railroad in 1872 provided farmers with a means of getting their crops to market.

The postwar years were a time of plenty and an opportunity to develop Plano as a community. In 1873, the Carpenters helped establish the First Christian Church of Plano; three years later, they helped build Bethany Church, school and cemetery. R.W. Carpenter also provided money to establish Add-Ran College, which later became Texas Christian University.

Mrs. Carpenter died in 1882. Capt. Carpenter later married Nellie Tipton, who bore him another son. He died in 1898, the victim of an

accident involving a runaway horse. His contributions to Plano and the larger community are still being felt today.

The sons of R.W. and Lizzie Carpenter carried the family name into a number of professions, including medicine, commerce, banking, politics and the judiciary. They have been mayors and members of the Plano City Council. Carpenters have served a total of more than 30 years on the Plano school board.

Carpenter Middle School, which opened in 1978, was named after R.W. Carpenter. It sits on land that was farmed by his son Gip.

Almost 150 years after he alighted

“Each year, great roundups were held and every family participated,” wrote two Carpenter grandsons in a 100-year history of the family assembled in 1952. “The calves were branded with the brands of the cows they followed as each settler had his special brand. Community drives were held and the cattle went up the Chisholm and Shawnee trails in herds of thousands into St.

Louis, where a 4-year-old steer sold for \$10.”

— A carpenter family history assembled in 1952

from that stagecoach, R.W. Carpenter lies in Bethany Cemetery between the graves of his wives. The historic enclave of grave sites sits along Custer Road, just north of Legacy Drive, now wedged between new homes and heavy traffic.

Bethany Church, shown in 1916, was established by the Carpenter family in 1876. The family was also involved in founding the college that became Texas Christian University.



Courtesy photo

SOURCES:

- *Plano, Texas: The Early Years* by Mozelle Jones Campbell, Mari-belle McLaurine Davis, Betty Harrington Stranz, Frances Bates Wells and Shirley Carter Schell; *Texas: The Dark Corner of the Confederacy*, edited by B.P. Gal-loway; *This Band of Heroes: Texans Go To War* by James M. McCaffrey.
- *The diaries of Elizabeth Matthews Carpenter*
- *Various family recollections written by Roy F. Carpenter and Russell B. Carpenter.*
- *Interviews with Doris Thompson and Mary Katherine Carpenter.*
- *Carpenter family papers stored in the genealogy section of Plano's Harrington Library.*