

## PANEL A 1865—1876

The first panel of the Historic Wall celebrates the infancy of Fort Worth. In 1872, there were only 500 residents. The cattle industry was dominant and the area was a part of Hell's Half Acre, with its bars and brothels.

African Americans were among the cowboys driving cattle to the city, as well as owning saloons and other service businesses.

The first recorded African-American businessman was John Pratt, a blacksmith, in 1865. African-American women were hired to do the laundry when the first small hotel was built.

The Civil War ended in 1863; however, slaves in Texas did not receive the news until June 19, 1865, which is still celebrated as Juneteenth. Free slaves who did not sign contracts with former owners who lived in tents provided by Union soldiers. Union soldiers protected the polls when African Americans first voted in 1868.

The Allen Chapel AME was created in 1871. The news of the Texas & Pacific railroad coming to Fort Worth created a population explosion. Small homesteads sprung up that had gardens, chickens and smokehouses. Young boys were hired to chase the wild hogs from the yards, panthers were seen in the streets and tall sunflowers grew everywhere.



The bottom band includes: A Panther, Wild Grapes, a Partridge, Horseshoe, Fish, Maize and a Black Bear.

**TRINITY METRO THANKS ALL OF THE COMMUNITY LEADERS, THE BLACK HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY AND HISTORIC FORT WORTH WHO MADE THE HISTORIC WALL A REALITY.**

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Jim Austin  
Gyna Bivens  
Ray Boothe  
Eduardo Cañas  
Christopher Ebert  
Donna Evans  
Paul Geisel  
Curtis Haley, Sr.  
Judy Harman  
Kathleen Hicks  
Renne Higginbotham-Brooks  
Barbara Holston  
Greg Hughes  
Cecil Johnson  
Pearl Jones  
J.R. Kimball  
Opal Lee  
William Leonard  
Gordon Marchant  
The Hon. Ralph McCloud  
Rev. B.L. McCormick  
The Hon. Frank Moss  
Patrina Newton  
Dr. Edmund Pillsbury  
Susan Pritchett  
Dave Ragan  
Debbie Reynolds-Hazen  
Lenora Rolla (deceased)  
Bob Ray Sanders  
Richard Spraberry  
Frank Staton  
Pat Svacina  
Sarah Walker  
Frank Wallace  
Joyce Williams  
Libby Willis

800 Cherry St.  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

RIDE **TRINITYMETRO**.org  
817.215.8600

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## PRESERVING THE PAST LEADING THE WAY INTO THE FUTURE

A guide to the wall panels at  
the Fort Worth Central Station.

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## TRINITY METRO IS PROUD OF ITS COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC ART

The Historic Wall was dedicated on February 24, 2002 to commemorate the important and vibrant African-American commercial and historic warehouse district that existed at the site of the Fort Worth Central Station between 1865 and 1940. Working with the State Historic Preservation Office, the Black Historical and Genealogical Society, Historic Fort Worth and many community volunteers, Trinity Metro developed this display to perpetuate the economic and cultural contributions of this era.

The five panels weave a rich history of business and commerce on the eastern edge of downtown.

In 1999, Trinity Metro created a committee made up of executive committee members and representatives from the city's preservation community to discuss how best to remember the history of the area.

A nationwide request for proposals was sent describing the project. Trinity Metro received more than 50 submissions. The help of local art experts was then sought to determine what kind of display was appropriate and to choose the artist. Twenty years after the first committee meeting, the historic wall is a reminder of Fort Worth's past.

The Historic Wall is the work of Denton artist Paula Blincoe Collins. She has worked in clay since being first given a lump of moist earth by an art professor in 1968. The Fort Worth Central Station, located at 9th and Jones streets in downtown Fort Worth, brings together many modes of transportation at one location. It provides a seamless connection between commuter trains, regional trains, and buses.



## PANEL B 1876—1900

In 1876, the train arrived in Fort Worth bringing settlers of Chinese, Irish and Africa-American descent to live in the city. Other transportation options sprung up including the first horse-drawn trolley. Business flourished including Anchor Mills in 1880, Acme Brick in 1891, Binyon O'Keefe Storage in 1877, and two breweries, Texas Brewing Company and Casey Swasey.

The Spring Palace showcased agricultural triumphs in the fertile land around the city. Hogan's Alley was a landmark. Chinese restaurants and laundries were established. Other less reputable business also prospered including large houses of ill repute, small brothels called "cribs," gambling houses and saloons.

Adventure seekers of all kinds including cowpunchers and buffalo hunters kicked up their heels in the bustling community. Gunfights were frequently used to solve disputes. The Knights of Pythias was formed as a backbone of the community. The African-American community celebrated several milestones during this period. The I.M. Terrell School listed four teachers in 1882. The Ninth Street Colored School was also in session. The Texas Colored State Fair, organized by William Madison McDonald, was in Fort Worth in 1887.

Mount Gilead Church services were held in a small frame building. Sanitation was a concern from the many flies around the fresh meat markets, cattle and other animals. Homesteads, which were plentiful now, each had a water barrel, and water was also hauled by horse-drawn wagons.



In bottom band: A Deer, Bluebonnet, Dove, Slate, Train Wheel, Flies and Acme Brick.

## PANEL C 1900—1920

By 1907, there were more than 50 African-American-owned businesses flourishing in the area including doctors, hotels, barbershops, dentists, tailors, millineres, butchers, grocers and beauty shops. Examples of these were the Little Dixie Barber Shop and S.H. Shelton cleaners. The Fraternal Bank and Trust, established in 1912 by William "Gooseneck" McDonald, was integral in assisting families in saving for their homes and businesses.

The Ethel Ransom Memorial Hospital opened as did the C. Morrow People's Undertaking and Ambulance service. I.M Terrell School completed a new building in 1909.

The Majestic Theater was a lively vaudeville-style entertainment place. Prince Memorial CME was established and in 1920, Mount Gilead completed construction of its building. Lenora Rolla, a young woman during this period, would later found the Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society. Warehouses being built were the Nash Hardware building and the Hunt-Hawes Grocer Company in 1910, the Axtell Windmill Supply Company in 1916 and the Winfield Garage and Livery.

The city moved from horses to cars and even sported a Model T Ford plant on Commerce Street. Transportation choices increased including the first electric trolley and Cooper Cab services. This period also marks the beginning of World War I, in which many African Americans proudly served their country. Free Masons also came on the scene in 1906.



In bottom band: A Toy Car, Indian Head Nickel, Model T, Electric Trolley, Ice Cream Cone, the Reverse of the Nickel Showing the Bison and a Young Girl's Doll.

## PANEL D 1920—1930

This era marked the beginning of modernization in Fort Worth. Deliveries were made by motor cars, and there were no more horses and mules in town.

The city and the African-American business district began to diversify. The Fort Worth Hornet told the stories of the community. At I.M. Terrell School, Professor and Mrs. I.M. Terrell were broadening the curriculum to include theater and sports like basketball, in which they were state champions.

Opal Lee attended Cooper Street Elementary and then taught there for more than a decade after the school was renamed the Amanda F. McCoy Elementary. She later became a home school counselor for the Fort Worth Independent School District and organized an annual community Juneteenth celebration.

The diversity of housing was changing as millionaire William McDonald built his mansion while other African Americans moved to the Rock Island Bottoms, now lost to flooding and 1-35 road construction. Other construction brought the Knights of Pythias a new home as well as Fakes Warehouse, Montgomery Ward Catalog and Warehouse, and two drugstores, Payne's Ure and Stovall's.

The Produce Terminal Farmers Wholesale was a seven-day-a-week farmer's market bringing fresh produce into the city. Because many mothers were working during this time, a children's daycare is pictured.



In bottom band: A Peace Silver Dollar, Telephone, Apple Symbolizing Education, Basketball, Knights of Pythias Symbol, The Fort Worth Hornet Newspaper Logo and an Early Radio.

## PANEL E 1930—1940

The jazz age came to Fort Worth in a big way with performances at the Ritz Theater and Jim Hotel and the Masonic Mosque. T. Bone Walker, Mahalia Jackson, Pops Carter, local drummer Sonny Strain and many others were seen at local clubs wearing zoot suits and saddle shoes.

Charles Grays Sr. worked closely with Lenora Rolla on citizen concerns. Calvin Littlejohn chronicled the era through his photography. Reverend John Franklin Singleton was known as the "Howling Wolf" from his sermons. The Urban League worked to improve the African-American community.

Education continued to be important as teachers like Hazel Harvey Peace brought the classics to students at I.M. Terrell High School. Frank Staton, longtime educator, is represented for his tireless efforts for children.

Transportation moved into the modern age with the Texas and Pacific Railroad Station. The Great Depression hit hard, but the Fraternal Bank and Trust weathered the storm. Many residents and community leaders were once again called to defend their country in World War II like Dr. Marion Brooks, a prominent physician and community leader. Frank Wallace worked hard for fairness and job equity.



In bottom band: Front Page of the Fort Worth Mind, Camera, 78 RPM Record at KNOX Radio, Saddle Shoe, Liberty Half Dollar, Chicken for Fort Worth Poultry Company.