



Frequently-Asked Questions

What was the first name of our town?

- ▶ It was Gibbs.
- ▶ Apparently, the name came from Barnett Gibbs, a popular politician among farmers and who eventually became Lieutenant Governor of Texas.

Where does the name Coppel come from?

- ▶ We know for sure that the railroad opened its first depot here and named it Coppel in 1890.
- ▶ There was always a rumor that Mr. Coppel was the name of the engineer who drove the train through Coppel.
- ▶ In just the last year, after decades of uncertainty, we have identified the man for whom our town was named; at least we are reasonably sure. George Coppel was an extremely wealthy investor and financier in New York, and he specialized in dealing with railroads that went bankrupt. Our railroad, which was opening through our town in 1890, went bankrupt and was reopened under new ownership the next day. The legalities were handled, in part, by George Coppel.
- ▶ The railroad company, not necessarily intending to change the town's name but wanting to honor one of its dignitaries, assigned the name Coppel to its new depot.
- ▶ Railroads being so important to towns in those days, our town changed its name to Coppel in 1892.

When did our town get started?

- ▶ The first known settler to the area was James Parrish, and he established a homestead along present Moore Road in 1848.

What is the background on Grapevine Springs Park?

- ▶ The area was always popular, even back when roaming tribes of Indians camped there, probably drawn to the place by the spring water that bubbled up through the ground.
- ▶ In 1843, Sam Houston, President of the Republic of Texas, anticipating approaching statehood and wanting to promote settlement, traveled to Grapevine Springs to sign the first of many treaties with the violent Indian tribes in North Texas. Some of the most violent tribes, like the Comanches, would not cooperate, however, and Houston left the springs after six weeks of waiting. His agents eventually signed the treaty at Bird's Fort, which was a small fort near present Six Flags Over Texas. Houston also signed the treaty, and the original document is held in Texas state archives.
- ▶ The area was a popular stop-over for travelers, and there were a number of religious encampments held there.
- ▶ In 1937, the WPA built elaborate walking trails, barbecue pits, and retaining walls, and the area was officially named Grapevine Springs Park and, sometimes, Coppel Park.
- ▶ Locals held baseball games there, picnics, and other community events.
- ▶ After World War II, the park was no longer maintained by the state, and ownership shifted to Webb Roberts, who maintained the land as a private park, just as the WPA built it.
- ▶ In the mid-1990s, some of the land was donated to the City of Coppel, the city entered into an agreement with Dallas County, and the park was restored as a nature preserve. Coppel currently holds a 99-year lease on the park and maintains it.

What is the history of Coppel Schools?

- ▶ We have an old photo that shows "Coppel School" in 1897, but we suspect there were others before it, possibly in a log cabin, and probably meeting in one of the original church buildings.
- ▶ In 1908, an older school building was replaced in downtown Coppel with a two-story frame structure.
- ▶ In the 1920s, there were three local schools in our area: Gentry School, south of present highway 141, just off present Belt Line Road; Bethel School, on the corner of present Moore Road and Bethel School Road; and Coppel School, in old downtown Coppel, just east of the present Chamber of Commerce.
- ▶ In 1928, these three schools consolidated into one Coppel School, and a new brick building was built for it on the site of present Pinkerton Elementary School on Southwestern Boulevard.
- ▶ This school building burned and was rebuilt in 1949.
- ▶ Coppel School was then an eight-grade county school. Students who finished the eighth grade at Coppel attended high school in Carrollton.
- ▶ Coppel became an independent school district in 1959.
- ▶ Beginning in the fall of 1961, Coppel added a grade a year to its school, eventually forming a complete twelve-grade high school, and it produced its first graduating class in 1965.

What historical cemeteries exist in Coppel?

There are four:

- ▶ The Parrish Cemetery – the family cemetery of the original Parrish settlers, containing approximately 48 graves, including the grave of James Parrish, the first settler, located at 746 Cardinal Lane.
- ▶ The Historic Bethel Cemetery – formerly a public cemetery on land donated by the Parrish family, containing as many as 200 to 300 graves, but now with only two markers still present, located at 603 Christi Circle, preserved and restored, with a Texas State Historical Marker from 1989.
- ▶ The Bullock Cemetery – the family cemetery of Washington Curtis Bullock, containing approximately 40 graves, located at 331 S. Denton Tap Road, currently maintained by family members.
- ▶ The Stringfellow-Moore Cemetery – a family cemetery on land donated by the Stringfellow family, with approximately 28 graves, located north of 508 Carter Drive.

What are some demographics related to Coppel?

- ▶ The first general store in Coppel was opened in 1874 by W. O Harrison, located in the old downtown area, and it contained the first post office.
- ▶ In 1893, Coppel had four stores, a school, a lumber yard, a blacksmith shop, and a cotton gin.
- ▶ A bank opened in the downtown area of Coppel in 1909.
- ▶ In 1914, Coppel had two churches, two general stores, two blacksmiths, a bank, a hardware store, a telephone service, and a population of 450.
- ▶ By 1926, the population had decreased to 200 for a decade.
- ▶ The city of Coppel was officially incorporated in 1955, and in that year it elected its first mayor, R. M. Johnson, and built its own limited public water supply.
- ▶ In 1970, Coppel's population was 1,728, and it had eight businesses.
- ▶ By 2000, the population was almost 40,000.

What historical projects are currently underway?

- ▶ The Historical Society, in conjunction with the city, is restoring the Kirkland House, the oldest remaining house in Coppel, built in 1904, currently located on the southeast corner of West Bethel and S. Coppel Roads, in old town Coppel.
- ▶ The area there also has a historic windmill and a replica of the original Minyard's food store.
- ▶ That corner will be further developed as a historic preserve.
- ▶ We are currently working to get official state designation for all four of our historic cemeteries.
- ▶ We conduct annual archeological digs to unearth artifacts.
- ▶ We continually update our collection of historical photographs.
- ▶ We are compiling oral histories from long-time residents.
- ▶ We will be sponsoring a historic display in the new Senior Center/Community Center.
- ▶ We are recognizing outstanding student achievements in history studies in our schools.
- ▶ We are creating a DVD of Coppel history.
- ▶ We continue to work closely with our city council to preserve our town's history and to influence future development that will honor our heritage, especially in old town Coppel.

