

# Putting Coppell, Texas on the Map

By Philip LaBerge

Coppell Historical Society & Museum

When were the boundaries of what we call Coppell today established and why? In order to answer that question, one needs to explore the past.

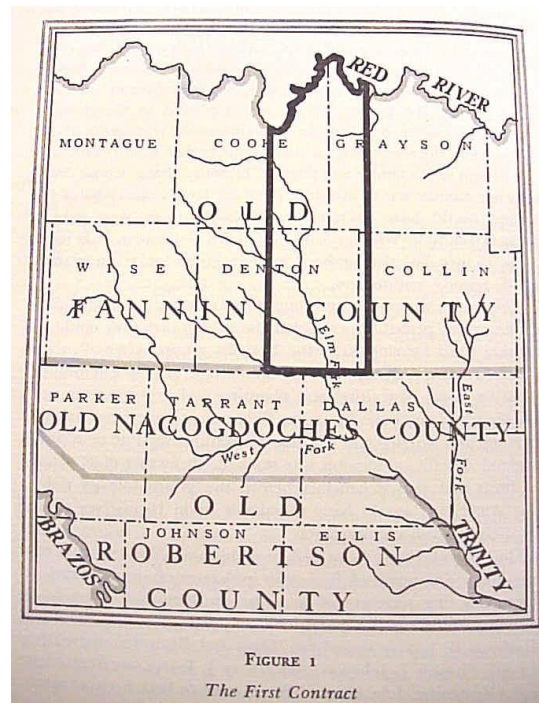
**13,500 years ago**, Paleo-Indians of the Clovis Culture first appeared in this area and were among the earliest humans in the Americas after migrating via the Beringia land bridge from Siberia.

**800 years ago**, Caddo Indian communities were widely dispersed from Longview, TX northward to Tulsa, OK. This area was on its western fringe of the Caddo Indian communities.

**In 1778**, the first European to pass through our area was Athanase de Mézières. He was the Lt. Governor of Natchitoches, Louisiana and was directed by the Spanish to form an alliance between various Indian tribes. He traveled from Waco north through our area along the western edge of the Cross Timbers to the Red River.

**In 1836**, the Texas Revolution led to the creation of the Republic of Texas, with Sam Houston as its president.

**In 1841**, a land grant was made to a group of investors led by an English investor named William S. Peters. It was named Peters Colony and the intent was to entice people from America and Britain to settle in the area.



**In 1841**, that same year, John Neeley Bryan built a cabin near the three forks of the Trinity River, and the settlement eventually becomes the city of Dallas.

**In 1842**, Preston Witt settled on the east side of the Elm Fork near Sandy Lake Road. He was the fourth person to settle land in the Dallas area. He built a grist mill on the property of A.W. Perry who settled there around the same time. To learn more, visit the [A.W. Perry Museum](#) in Carrollton.

**In 1843**, Sam Houston traveled from Crockett, Texas, along the Trinity River and arrived at Grapevine Springs in an attempt to sign the Republic's first Indian treaty.

**In 1847**, George Catlin painted *Caddo Indians Chasing Buffalo, Cross Timbers, Texas*,



**In 1848**, the Parrish family was granted 640 acres in Peter's colony and is thought to have been the first to settle within the boundaries of Coppell today. It wasn't for another 107 years that the boundaries of Coppell were actually established.

The area around where they settled was referred to as the Parrish Neighborhood. A community developed around the Parrish land and settlers soon established the Bethel Community. Later, the Gentry Community was established in the southern part of present day Coppell and named for the Gentry Family that settled there.

**In 1851**, Barnett Gibbs was born in Mississippi.

**In 1873**, Barnett Gibbs moved to Dallas in where he was an attorney. Gibbs was not a settler of the Coppell area, but owned a ranch south of the region. Old Town Coppell, located along Bethel and South Coppell Roads, was once called the Gibbs Community.

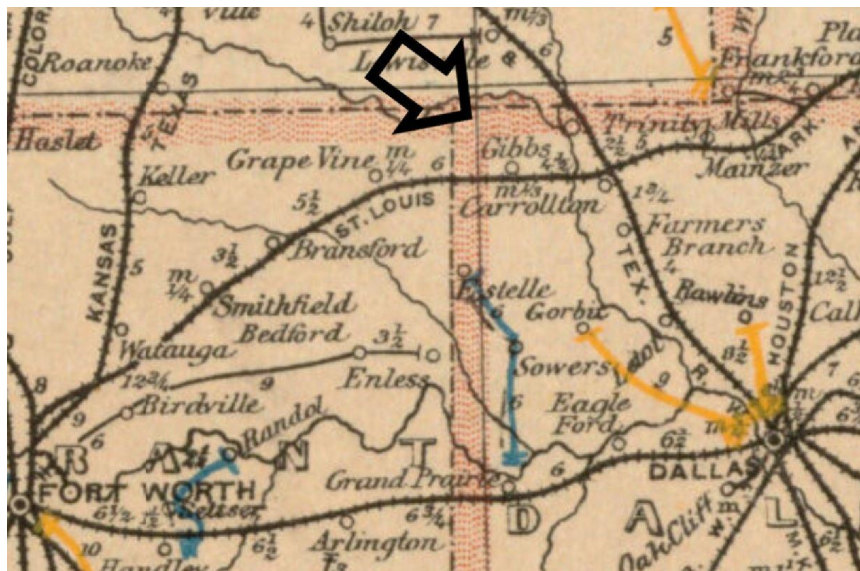
**In 1887**, the first post office in the area was built in the Gibbs Community and named after him. That occurred the year before the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railroad was built through the town.



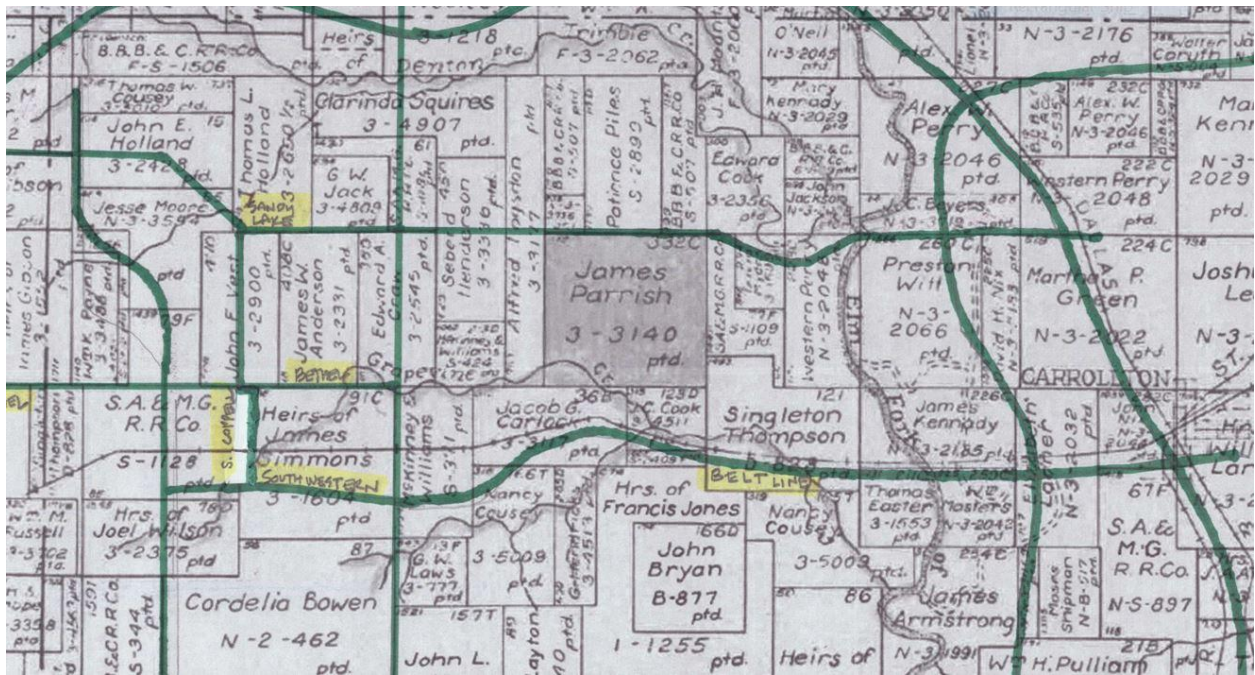
Barnett Gibbs

Gibbs served three terms as the city attorney of Dallas (1876-1882) before he was elected to the Texas Senate representing Dallas, Kaufman and Rockwall Counties in 1882. In 1884, he was elected lieutenant Governor and served from 1885 – 1887.

**In 1888**, the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas Railroad was built through Gibbs. This map shows the new railroad just after it was constructed and before the Coppell Depot was built on it in 1890.



This map shows the railroad line, the Parrish property and others around the turn of the century. Today's major roads and highways are shown in green.



**In 1892**, just five years after the post office had been named Gibbs, it changed its name to Coppell after the railroad depot which had been built bearing that name. After the depot was built, it is assumed that most people started referring to it as Coppell and that was the impetus for changing the post office name.



**In 1913**, Carrollton, Texas was established and set its western boundary along Denton Creek and the Elm Fork of the Trinity River.

**In 1955**, the boundaries of the Town of Coppell were defined when it was incorporated on November 18<sup>th</sup> of that year. See Appendix 1.

**In 1958**, this aerial photo was created showing the boundaries (yellow dashed line) of the Town of Coppel.



**On March 1, 1965**, the name was changed from the *Town of Coppel* to the *City of Coppel*. See Appendix – Item 3.

**In 2024**, here is a map of the City of Coppel. A lot has changed in the 132 years since the town was named Coppel in 1892.



*From the indigenous people to first live here,  
to the first Europeans who passed through here,*

*to the first people to settle here,  
to the first communities to be built here,*

*to the first railroad to lay track through here,  
to the first elected officials to define it as a town and then a City,*

*Coppell is a place defined by its past  
and the people who made it what it is today.*

*They all had a hand in putting Coppell on the map.*

# Appendix - Item 1: Coppell Incorporation Request – 18 Nov 1955

THE STATE OF TEXAS    ↓

COUNTY OF DALLAS       ↓

We, the undersigned petitioners, respectfully represent:

1. That we are residents of the Town of Coppell, Texas, situated in Dallas County, Texas.
2. That the said Town is not incorporated for municipal purposes.
3. That the undersigned constitute more than twenty qualified voters therein, who are actually bona fide residents within said Town.
4. That the said Town of Coppell, Texas, has a population of over two hundred (200) and less than ten thousand (10,000) inhabitants.
5. That the inhabitants of said Town desire that said Town shall be incorporated for municipal purposes as a Town, under the Aldermanic form of government, within the boundaries hereinafter described by metes and bounds, in accordance with the provisions of Article 1133, et seq., Chapter 11, of Title 28, Revised Civil Statutes of Texas of 1925, and amendments thereto.
6. That said Town, when incorporated, is to be known as "TOWN OF COPPELL, TEXAS".
7. That the territory proposed to be incorporated is described by metes and bounds as follows, to-wit:

Being a part of the E. A. Crow Survey, Abstract No. 301, the J. A. Simmons Survey, Abstract No. 1296, the S. A. & M. G. RR. Survey, Abstract No. 1439, the J. F. Vest Survey, Abstract No. 1508, and the J. W. Anderson Survey, Abstract No. 18, Dallas County, Texas, and being more particularly described by metes and bounds as follows:

BEGINNING at a point in the center line of New Belt Line Road at its intersection with the North corporate limits of the City of Dallas, Texas, as established on first reading;

THENCE North along the center line of New Belt Line Road to a point 1320 feet South of the center line of Thweatt Road;

THENCE West 5280 feet;

THENCE South and parallel to the center line of New Belt Line Road 9200 feet to a point;

THENCE East passing a Northwest corner of the City of Dallas, Texas, as established on first reading, continuing along the North corporate limits of the City of Dallas, Texas, to the place of Beginning.

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8. That said territory is situated wholly within the County of Dallas and the State of Texas.

9. That the area of said above described territory does not exceed two (2) square miles.

10. That there is attached hereto as a part of this petition a plat of said territory, and all of the territory above described is intended to be used strictly for Town purposes.

WHEREFORE, We respectfully request that an election be ordered to be held, under the applicable provisions of the Statutes, within said Town, for the purpose of determining whether or not the same shall be incorporated as a Town under the Aldermanic form of government.

DATED, this the 18th day of November, 1955.

Respectfully submitted,

W. A. Hodges

E. D. Scott

R. L. McDowell

R. A. Liberto

G. C. Lanham

John Q. Arnett

W. L. Rush

W.A. Maynard

J. W. Arnett

W. H. Plumlee

C. O. Parker

Mrs. C. O. Parker

J. F. Harwell

C.F. Thomas

R. M. Johnson

Ray Storey

E. C. Gentry

Mrs. E. C. Gentry

Mrs. C. P. Thomas

Wheelin H. Wilson

C. C. Mitchell

E. W. Parr

L. W. Wood

A. N. Corbin

W. F. Harwell

Mrs. W. F. Harwell

Benita McCain

Mrs. Mable E. Gentry

A. P. Vanbebber

Mrs. A. P. Vanbebber

Mrs. S. W. English

S. W. English

John R. Ledbetter

Mrs. John R. Ledbetter

*Handwritten initials*

## Appendix – Item 2: Town of Coppell Declaration of Incorporation

THE STATE OF TEXAS    (

COUNTY OF DALLAS       (

WHEREAS, on the 18th day of November, 1955, the application of W. A. Hodges and more than 34 other electors of the proposed Town of Coppell, County of Dallas, State of Texas, residing within the boundaries thereof, which boundaries are hereinafter described in writing, was duly signed and presented and filed with me, W. L. Sterrett, County Judge of Dallas County, Texas, praying that an election be ordered held in said Town of Coppell, Texas, within the boundaries described in said application by metes and bounds and hereinafter described as described in said application, for the purpose of determining whether the said Town of Coppell, Texas, shall form an incorporation under the Aldermanic form of government and be incorporated for municipal purposes to include the territory described in said application and said Town to be incorporated by the name of "TOWN OF COPPELL, TEXAS", for municipal purposes under and by virtue of the Constitution and Laws of the State of Texas, as a Town or Village, and under Title 28, of Revised Civil Statutes of Texas of 1925, and amendments thereto; and

WHEREAS, on the 21st day of November, 1955, there was upon evidence heard and proof submitted, found, adjudged and determined by me, W. L. Sterrett, County Judge of Dallas County, Texas, that the said Town of Coppell, Texas, so proposed to be incorporated and the territory included within the boundaries thereof, which said boundaries are hereinafter described, was wholly within Dallas County, Texas, and that the proposed Town of Coppell, Texas, was not incorporated for municipal purposes and no portion thereof was within a municipal corporation, and that said application was signed by more than twenty of the qualified electors, residents within the boundaries described in said application, and it was further found and adjudged that the territory embraced within said proposed Town of Coppell, Texas, contains less than two (2) square miles, and it was further found, upon satisfactory and sufficient proof thereof, that the said proposed Town of Coppell, Texas, contained more than two hundred (200) and less than ten thousand (10,000) inhabitants residing within the territory therein described and that all of the land embraced therein was such as is intended to be used strictly for Town purposes, and that the

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said petitioners were entitled to have the proposition as prayed for in their said application submitted as described in Title 28, Revised Civil Statutes of Texas of 1925, and thereupon, on November 21, 1955, I, W. L. Sterrett, County Judge of Dallas County, Texas, ordered that an election be held on the 17th day of December, 1955, in the said proposed Town of Coppell, Texas, and within the boundaries described in said application, which boundaries as therein described are hereinafter described, for the purpose of determining whether the Town of Coppell, Texas, shall be incorporated under the Aldermanic form of government for municipal purposes as prayed for, which order has been entered in the minutes of the Commissioners' Court of Dallas County, Texas, and which is referred to and made a part hereof for all purposes; and

WHEREAS, notice of said election was given as is provided for by law; and

WHEREAS, said election was held on the 17th day of December, 1955, in accordance with said order and in accordance with the Constitution and Laws of the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, on this the 19th day of December, 1955, returns of said election were duly made and filed with me, and being duly opened and canvassed by me and said returns being so canvassed, it was found and determined that there were cast at said election:

CORPORATION, 41 Votes

NO CORPORATION, 1 Vote

MAJORITY FOR CORPORATION, 40 Votes

and said returns of said election being in all respects in conformity with law, it was adjudged that a majority of the qualified electors of said Town of Coppell, Texas, voting at said election, voted in favor of the said Town of Coppell, Texas, being incorporated under the Aldermanic form of government for municipal purposes.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, W. L. STERRETT, County Judge of Dallas County, Texas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by law, and in pursuance to Title 28, Revised Civil Statutes of Texas of 1925, do hereby declare and make known to all persons that the said Town of Coppell, Texas, is legally incorporated under the Aldermanic form of government for municipal purposes, under the name of "TOWN OF COPPELL, TEXAS", including all of the inhabitants and territory within the boundaries described hereinafter and shall hence forth be entitled to exercise all of the

W. L. STERRETT  
County Judge

rights, powers, immunities, privileges and franchises as conferred in Chapter 11, of Title 28, Revised Civil Statutes of Texas of 1925, and amendments thereto relating to Towns and Villages, and the Constitution and General Laws of the State of Texas, to include and embrace the following described territory and lands, being the same as described in said application, and in said order and notice of election, and described by metes and bounds as follows:

"Being a part of the E. A. Crow Survey, Abstract No. 301, the J. A. Simmons Survey, Abstract No. 1296, the S. A. & M. G. RR. Survey, Abstract No. 1439, the J. F. Vest Survey, Abstract No. 1508, and the J. W. Anderson Survey, Abstract No. 18, Dallas County, Texas, and being more particularly described by metes and bounds as follows:

BEGINNING at a point in the center line of New Belt Line Road at its intersection with the North corporate limits of the City of Dallas, Texas, as established on first reading;

THENCE North along the center line of New Belt Line Road to a point 1320 feet South of the center line of Thweatt Road

THENCE West 5280 feet;

THENCE South and parallel to the center line of New Belt Line Road 9200 feet to a point;

THENCE East passing a Northwest corner of the City of Dallas, Texas, as established on first reading, continuing along the North corporate limits of the City of Dallas, Texas, to the place of Beginning.

THIS ORDER is made and entered by me in the records of the Commissioners' Court of Dallas County, Texas, this the 19th day of December, 1955, and the County Clerk is ordered to prepare and duly certify a true, full and correct copy of this order, together with a plat of said Town of Coppell, Texas, and to record the same in the proper Deed Records of Dallas County, Texas.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, my official hand this the 19th day of December, 1955.

W. L. STERRETT  
County Judge of Dallas County, Texas

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Ordinance No 23

An Ordinance of the Town of Coppell, Texas  
changing its designation from "Town"  
to "City".

Now, Therefore, Be It Ordained  
by the Town Council of the Town  
of Coppell, Texas:

Section One: That from and  
after the passage of this Ordinance  
the ~~Town~~ designation of the Town  
will be changed from "Town of Coppell"  
to "City of Coppell".

Duly Passed by the governing  
body of the City of Coppell, Texas  
on the 1st day of March, 1965

W.T. Crosby  
Mayor

Attest:  
A.C. [unclear]  
City Secretary

Note: From the beginning in 1956, all minutes were typewritten.  
This is the only hand written ordinance to date.