

DISCOVER DRIPPING SPRINGS



AN HISTORIC EXPERIENCE

DRIPPING SPRINGS HISTORY

Eight years after Texas became a part of the United States, three American families from Mississippi decided to make their home in this beautiful part of the Texas Hill Country. Following the road that carried supplies to Fort Martin Scott, the U.S. Army fort in Fredericksburg, they stopped their wagons to form a frontier settlement in the winter of 1853 amongst the area's rolling hills, rock-bottom streams, majestic views, and abundant wildlife.



Even though earlier settlers had been farming in the nearby valleys of Little Barton and Onion Creeks in the early 1850s, it was the "Old Three" — the Pound, Moss, and Wallace families — who helped bring Dripping Springs to prominence. John Moss became the new settlement's first postmaster in 1857, necessitating a town name. His wife Nannie is credited with officially naming it for the lush, fern-covered, limestone ledges on a branch of Dripping Springs that dripped water. Then a known gathering place for the Tonkawa Indians, this spot today is situated in the heart of Dripping Springs, near the west end of Mercer Street, the town's historic main street.

Located 30 miles from Austin, the capital of Texas, Dripping Springs is a place where the history and heritage of early Texas lives on. The "Gateway to the Texas Hill Country," Dripping Springs is surrounded by the scenic natural beauty and wonderful attractions of the area — historic homes and sites, museums, antique shopping, world-class barbeque, vineyards, state parks, nature preserves, lakes and rivers, rolling hills, and magnificent live oak woodlands.



Rich in history, a number of the older, interesting buildings and homes still exist in Dripping Springs. Providing a peek into the last century and a half of life in Texas, these places and times help to tell the story of who we are today. The Dripping Springs Historic Preservation Commission and other preservation-minded citizens are pleased to present this heritage with hope that the spirit of our pioneers, founders, and their families will live on.

Early settlers here found a place of abundance: water from bounteous springs; woodlands and limestone rock for log cabins and stone homes; and fish and wildlife for food. Rocks, cleared from farmed fields, were even used to build rock fences.

Although there were homes and businesses scattered about over the years, Dripping Springs would actually be born in 1881 when W. T. Chapman established a 12-block city plan. The resulting growth included a school, a hotel, mercantile stores, blacksmith shops, a livery stable, a stagecoach stop, a steam engine-powered mill, and cotton gins. During the next century, most livelihoods came from farming and ranching. Though there were difficult and often financially perilous challenges, the settlement's location on the Austin-Fredericksburg Road helped it survive.

Businesses adjusted as the mode of transportation changed with the arrival of a Stanley Steamer automobile in 1915. After that, it was garages instead of blacksmith shops, gas stations in lieu of livery stables. The coming of electricity in the late 1930s also made other changes possible. Further transformations took place with the modernization of Highway 290 in 1958, including the loss of many of the beautiful rock fences which were purchased and used by the highway crews for the new roadbed. Highway 290, was formerly Mercer Street, the narrow main street of Dripping Springs.

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OTHER HISTORICAL SITES

A DR. POUND PIONEER FARMSTEAD, 1854 **570 FOUNDERS PARK ROAD**

The oldest existing building in Dripping Springs is the log room of this house. It has a rock-walled cellar – added for protection from storms and Indian attacks – and a kitchen that was constructed over the water cistern, providing indoor access. A rose bush in front is said to have traveled from Mississippi in 1853, surviving all these years. Dr. Pound also used one room as a hospital. Renovated in 2003, the Pound House is now an operating museum.



B SPAW HOUSE, 1913 – 400 OLD FITZHUGH ROAD

Originally a wooden-frame house, its rock exterior was added from remnants of the Middlebrook School/Church. It is said that John Spaw simply walked down Creek Road and carried the rocks back to his house.



C MCLENDON TELEPHONE/HOUSE, 1913 **250 OLD FITZHUGH ROAD**

The owner of the Dripping Springs Telephone Company, William McLendon, built this house as both his family home and the telephone offices. This rounded front room, with its many windows, still shows marks where telephone equipment was installed.

D SHORT MAMA'S HOUSE, 1900 – 101 COLLEGE STREET

This home was most likely built by W.G. McKellar shortly after he purchased the property in 1899. It is a two-story wooden frame house that originally had a gabled upstairs porch. "Short Mama" was Beulah Crumley



Haydon. She lived in the house until her death in 1989 at the age of 97. Short Mama bought one of the first washing machines in town and after she was done using it would allow others to come by and use it. The little house out back proved to be one of the first public washaterias in Dripping Springs.

E JAMES PATTON HOUSE, 1895 – 2201 HWY 290 W.

The two-story "I-house" form of the Patton House distinguishes it from many other historic homes in Dripping Springs. This elegant but simple house type was introduced into Texas by immigrant farmers from the Midwestern states and examples typically date from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century period.

F JENNINGS ROCK HOUSE, 1944 – 705 HWY 290

The Jennings Rock House is an uncommon local example of the Tudor Revival architectural style that also features especially good craftsmanship in the rock exterior of the building. Built with steeply pitched gables, a prominent chimney, and a quaint entry porch, houses of this style reflect eclectic early twentieth century American interests in early English building traditions. The irregular patterning of the fieldstone siding represents a pattern commonly seen on Dripping Springs homes but close examination of the raised or "beaded" mortar joints between the stones reveals a higher degree of craftsmanship than is commonly practiced today.

G MILKHOUSE SPRINGS – 101 CREEK ROAD

This area includes a box canyon with rocky ledges that form a natural amphitheater at its head. At its base is a cave-like spot. This natural "room" with cold spring water flowing through it used to be an ideal place for storing milk and other dairy products. With spring-fed pools and a limestone ledge "shower," this spot was also popular for picnics.

H WILL CROW ROCK HOUSE, 1938 – 105 CREEK ROAD

With its rock exterior and rock fence, this house sits on a spot overlooking Milkhouse Springs. The purpose of this rock fence was to divert flood waters from reaching the house. The story behind the fence is that Will Crow had the unproven

rock mason erect the fence as evidence of his skill before being hired to rock the house. It must have been good enough, because he got the job.

I DR. HARRISON HOUSE, 1883 – 200 BLUFF STREET

This house is one of the oldest sites in Dripping Springs. This house was home to several doctors, including Dr. Harrison who trained under Dr. Pound.



J FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 1901 **203 HWY 290**

When local Baptists decided to construct a separate church building—allowing a move from the Dripping Springs Academy, they purchased this site from W.T. Chapman. Designed as a typical Texas church, complete with a steeple, it was built with native cedar and cypress timbers. The church building was tragically damaged by fire on September 5, 2007, but the location remains an important part of the community and a new church was built on the same location in 2010.

K GEORGE DICKEY HOUSE, 1886 – 26901 RR12

This rock house is situated in a beautiful location with Walnut Springs flowing just past the building. A rock mason and a carpenter, George Dickey built his house with a gabled porch over the second story's outside front door. He also added a dam on the Springs in order to raise fish. At the age of 110 years, this historic home was tripled in size with the addition of sections that matched the original stone structure.



L PHILLIPS CEMETERY, 1880 – 26001 RR12

Gravesites here had fences or rock walls around them to protect the shallow graves, due to the difficulty of digging into the rocky soil. After years of dealing with the tough soil, it eventually became necessary to use dynamite to blast holes for graves. In 1991, the site was designated a Texas Historic Landmark

M A.A. ELSNER HOUSE/BARN, 1905 – 23351 RR150

This house was purchased in 1905 and was originally one story. An increasingly rare element of rural farm and ranch properties is the adjacent rock barn. This one is especially distinctive for its heavy limestone construction and arched openings at the main hallway. This feature as well as its size and shape suggest a specialized use of this barn, perhaps as an old stagecoach or mail stop. The shed additions to the barn are recent but feature traditional board-and-batten siding that relates to the historic age of the barn.



N WALLACE MOUNTAIN CEMETERY, 1880 – 704 E. US HWY 290

John Wallace volunteered this land on the top of Wallace Mountain claiming that the area was not usable for anything else anyway. A bold move, given that he did not own the land. The cemetery was actually established some years later by its owners, although burials had taken place for the previous 20 years, probably due to the wonderful scenic view. Many notable early residents of Dripping Springs are buried here. Near the bottom of Wallace Mountain is the Wallace Family Cemetery, established in 1869. This is the gravesite of John Wallace, his son and his daughter.

O WALLACE ROCK CORRAL, 19TH CENTURY – US HWY 290 E., WEST OF CANNON RANCH ROAD

At this location was the Wallace Stage Stop, where horses and other animals could be kept. It has since been reconstructed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
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OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.CITYOFDRIPPINGSPRINGS.COM



HISTORIC DRIPPING SPRINGS WALKING TOUR - MAP



1. C.S. Graham House, 1884 - 222 Mercer Street
2. Chapman Boarding House, 1881 - 102 Old Fitzhugh Road
3. Dripping Springs Academy, 1881 - 103 Old Fitzhugh Road
4. Allen Stephenson High School, 1939 - 101 Old Fitzhugh Road
5. McQuiston Drug Store, 1901 - 300-B Mercer Street
6. Rinky Dink Domino Hall, 1939 - 300-C Mercer Street
7. Solon Glosson Grocery, 1952 - 300 Mercer Street
8. Patterson Mercantile Store, 1906 - 302 Mercer Street
9. F.W. Miller Rock Café, 1940 - 304 Mercer Street
10. F.W. Miller Texaco Station, 1940 - 310 Mercer Street
11. Garnett Gulf Station/Garage, 1925 - 400 Mercer Street
12. Bill Garnett Bungalow and Rock Fence, 1925 - 402 Mercer Street
13. Namesake: Dripping Springs, at bridge on west end of Mercer Street
14. Marshall-Chapman House, pre-1870 - 500 Mercer Street
15. Crow Wool/Mohair Store, 1937 - 204 Mercer Street
16. Spaw Barber Shop/Post Office, 1937 - 305 Mercer Street
17. A.L. Davis Mercantile, 1891 - 301 Mercer Street
18. Haydon Central Garage/Mobil, 1937 - 299 Mercer Street
19. Goslin Drug Store, 1941 - 316 Mercer Street
20. Crenshaw Garage/Texaco, 1926 - 207 Mercer Street
21. Crenshaw/Ferrell Movie Theater, 1937 - 105 Mercer Street



DR. POUND PIONEER FARMSTEAD
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1 C.S. GRAHAM HOUSE, 1884 – 222 MERCER STREET
Originally this house faced the west. Two versions popped up about its history in the mid-'20s. One version says it burned down, the other that it was simply remodeled. Whichever is true, the building was rebuilt using the same fireplace, and this time with the front door facing Mercer Street.

**2 CHAPMAN BOARDING HOUSE, 1881
102 OLD FITZHUGH ROAD**
This house was designed by W.T. Chapman to board some of the students of the then-new Dripping Springs Academy. It is the third-oldest surviving building in town.

**3 DRIPPING SPRINGS ACADEMY, 1881
103 OLD FITZHUGH ROAD**
W.T. Chapman, founder of Dripping Springs, donated the land for the Academy. Operated initially as a private boarding academy, the school consisted of a stone, one-story, two-room main building. The main building – with a second story added in 1922 – also served as a Baptist church from 1881-1901 and as a public schoolhouse from 1889-1949. In 1952, the building became the new home of the Rambo Masonic Lodge. The Academy was dedicated as a Texas Historic Landmark in 1967.



**4 ALLEN STEPHENSON HIGH SCHOOL, 1939
101 OLD FITZHUGH ROAD**
Used for ten years for its original intention, this building was built as a high school addition to the Dripping Springs Academy. Since being replaced in 1949, it has served as a community meeting center and school and county offices.

**5 McQUISTION DRUG STORE, 1901 –
300-B MERCER STREET**
Sold by McQuiston after five years of operation, the new owner (not a druggist) required that local doctors come to the store and fill their own prescriptions. This building was moved several times, and to its current location behind the post office in 1972. It has served a variety of businesses.

**6 RINKY DINK DOMINO HALL, 1939
300-C MERCER STREET**
Just down the alley sits Dripping's famed "domino hall." Though tiny, the Rinky Dink did at least take the place of a nearby oak tree where games were held. The construction of the Rinky Dink was funded on a pay-as-you-play plan – 25¢ here and there until the costs were repaid. Never residing on land it could call its own, the Hall moved from its original spot next to the F.W. Miller Rock Café (in the alley behind the post office) after protests that playing moon was an act of gambling.



7 SOLON GLOSSON GROCERY, 1952 – 300 MERCER STREET
Formerly the owner of the Red & White Grocery (destroyed by fire), Glosson rebuilt his business with a new grocery constructed on a part of the Dripping Springs Academy's old playground. No longer a store, the building is now Dripping's Post Office.

**8 PATTERSON MERCANTILE STORE, 1906
302 MERCER STREET**
Built as a 1-1/2 story general merchandise store directly across the street from Davis Mercantile, the limestone Patterson Building was used as a grocery (with owners sometimes living in its loft) and post office until 1942. Since then, it has been used as a feed store, lumber yard, furniture store, theater, dance studio, and offices. Destroyed by fire in 1938, it was rebuilt with a single story only.



9 F.W. MILLER ROCK CAFÉ, 1940 – 304 MERCER STREET
Deciding that a café would be a good addition to his business, Fritz Miller built this small rock building next door to his Texaco station. Known also for many years as Bonnie's Café, it was converted to a residence in 1965 and then used, since 1992, as office space.



**10 F.W. MILLER TEXACO STATION, 1940
310 MERCER STREET**
Miller's station has retained its appearance through the years, acting as a clear reflection of a time when Dripping Springs was a small town and life's pace was slower.

**11 GARNETT GULF STATION/GARAGE, 1925
400 MERCER STREET**
On the site grounds of the old livery stable Bill Garnett went with the winds of change and, together with the blacksmith (his dad), began to provide service for automobile drivers in 1925.

**12 BILL GARNETT BUNGALOW AND ROCK FENCE, 1925
402 MERCER STREET**
The Garnett Bungalow is one of the best local examples of this Craftsman-inspired architectural style. Distinctive elements include the tapered wooden columns and raked roof eaves. A unique attraction of the yard is the relic rock fence which features include a cannonball, bayonet, shotgun barrel and a spur embedded in it from its construction. It also has several fossil rocks used to build it as well.



13 NAMESAKE: DRIPPING SPRINGS – AT BRIDGE ON WEST END OF MERCER STREET
The Springs are delineated by a granite marker donated by the Lions Club. Lush, fern-covered, limestone ledges house these springs, a former gathering place for Tonkawa Indians and a source of water for early settlers. The Springs no longer drip water as much as before due to the continuing spread of water-hungry cedar trees and the end-results of land development.



**14 MARSHALL-CHAPMAN HOUSE, PRE-1870
500 MERCER STREET**
Located just above the ledges of the Dripping Springs, this is one of the first houses in the area built from lumber, not logs. The limestone rock portion was added after the house was moved to Mercer Street in 1871. Burrell Marshall used his home briefly as a post office while he was postmaster. It was occupied by W.T. Chapman's family and their descendents until 1942 and, as one of the oldest area homes, is a designated Texas Historic Landmark.



**15 CROW WOOL/MOHAIR STORE, 1937
204 MERCER STREET**
From 1920-1970, raising sheep and goats for their wool and mohair was an important part of the local economy. Will Crow's wool center was started in 1937 to serve this industry. Two years later, the store burned while fully stocked with wool. Crow, however, soon reopened and even added the town's first hardware store to this site in 1946.



**16 SPAW BARBER SHOP/POST OFFICE, 1937
305 MERCER STREET**
Johnny Spaw and his wife Mary, Dripping's postmistress, turned this little rock barber shop into a combination location to have your lock's trimmed and your stamps purchased. There was a partition right down the middle of the tiny building, with the barber shop on one side and the post office on the other. Mary conducted some of the postal business through a little metal window and (it's rumored) stored the money in a safe beneath a trapdoor in the floor.



**17 A.L. DAVIS MERCANTILE, 1891
301 MERCER STREET**
The bottom floor of Davis Mercantile was designed to serve as a store, while the second story was used as a group meeting space, including serving as the Masonic Lodge from 1920-1952. It is said that its 1920s store owner, David Jones ran one of the first "help yourself" establishments. When drunk, Jones allowed folks to pick their goods, hopefully pay, and then leave. The building has served many uses – as also the Red & White Grocery, a church meeting hall, and an antiques store. It burned to the ground in 1951 and only one story was rebuilt. It served as a hardware store from 1952-1990 and has served as a post office.



**18 HAYDON CENTRAL GARAGE/MOBIL, 1937
299 MERCER STREET**
Known for its unusual rockwork, this service station is made from rock and granite from numerous resources in Central Texas and also features area petrified wood.



19 GOSLIN DRUG STORE, 1941 – 316 MERCER STREET
While this rock building was being built, the old drugstore was moved 22 feet to the west. The move was so smooth that W.C. Goslin never missed a day of business. The rock store was also the town bus stop for many years.

**20 CRENSHAW GARAGE/TEXACO, 1926
207 MERCER STREET**
Originally constructed of wood and tin, this gas station/garage was built at a business hot-spot at the intersection of Mercer and San Marcos Streets, on the highway between Austin and Fredericksburg. The rock exterior was added as a facelift in 1938. Since the re-routing of Highway 290, it's been used as a residence and as a barber shop.



**21 CRENSHAW/FERRELL MOVIE THEATER, 1937
105 MERCER STREET**
Built and then operated by these two auto mechanics for only two years, the theater eventually became the DisTex movie theater from 1945-48, which showed movies only on weekends. It has been a bank since 1981.

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