

Rosedale Rambles

1993 through 1999

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1994 ROSEDALE RAMBLE

Maps and notes prepared by Karen Collins with the help of Forrest Preece and numerous other residents and former residents for the Rosedale Neighborhood Association.

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Historical Background of the Rosedale Neighborhood

In 1827, Stephen F. Austin received a contract from the Mexican government to settle 100 families in the Austin area north of the river. This third Austin colony was known as the "Little Colony." S.F. Austin selected an eleven-league tract of land for his own personal use; he intended to build his home on it, and this tract included the Rosedale area. But something happened (same say shenanigans and a highly-placed relative) and in 1835 Thomas Jefferson Chambers got title from the Mexican government to eight leagues of the land that Austin had selected, and this included Rosedale.

After the revolution in 1836, the Republic of Texas did not recognize Chambers' claim and granted most of the eight leagues to others, including George W. Spier who received title to one league which covered the Rosedale area. This resulted in a lawsuit filed in 1850 by Chambers against the "second" owners. The litigation dragged on for years, clouding titles and annoying residents. In 1865, Chambers was mysteriously assassinated but his heirs continued the lawsuit. Most landowners finally compromised and paid a second time in order to clear titles to their land. Much of Rosedale by the late 1860s was owned by John Hancock, a lawyer, who in 1868 cleared title to the land he owned. But the litigation continued until 1925 for some parts of Austin. (More recent Historical Background is found in 1993 Rosedale Ramble notes.)

1. 1212 West 38th Street – The upper story of this house was built possibly over 100 years ago at 2906 San Gabriel as the garage apartment behind the main house (used to be Craft Corner and now is Banana Bay Trading Co.). When Lamar Boulevard was cut through (about 1947-1948), the owner's brother, Fred Eby, Jr., moved the garage out of the path of the new street to land he was developing between 38th and 39th streets. The garage apartment became the second floor and a new first floor was built. The entire structure was rocked. The house was purchased by Vy and Frank Tull in 1949 and they lived here for 14 years. Vy Tull, an Australian lady, mixed cement and laid rock for two patios incorporating some Australian coins in the rock work. In the front yard of this house are three fine native post oaks and a large mesquite tree.

2. Seiders' Spring (east side of Shoal Creek between 34th and 38th streets) – Seiders' father-in-law, Gideon White, purchased 1,237 acres in 1838 from George Speir and built a log house near the springs on Shoal Creek. White was killed by Indians in 1842.



Ruins of bathhouse (now gone) at Seiders Springs

His son-in-law, Edward Seiders, lived on the land near the springs inherited by his wife, Louisa, and gave the springs his name. In 1872, Seiders built a bathing and pleasure resort at the springs, putting in picnic tables, a dance pavilion, and croquet court. The bathhouse was two-storied on the creek side. Above, beer and hard-boiled eggs were sold while below cold spring-fed baths in concrete “tubs” cost 25 cents.



Ruins of concrete “tubs” (now gone) at Seiders Springs

Due to ill health, Seiders sold this land in 1890 to E.J. Heppenheimer of New York. Heppenheimer built a dam across Shoal Creek just north of 34th Street and purchased white swans to adorn the lake created by the dam. He also platted the Glen Ridge Addition on both sides of Shoal Creek hoping to sell many lots. In 1900, a flood washed out the dam leaving Heppenheimer’s plans in ruins. Some of the property was sold in 1961 for Medical Park Towers and Seton Infirmary, but the springs are still active and can be visited by the Hike and Bike Trail.

3. 3802 Tonkawa – Built about 1917 with novelty drop siding #117 at 2508 San Gabriel Street for the Homer H. Rutherford family. They lived here until ca. 1921 when the Peter Paterson (Peter, Mary and Elizabeth) family purchased it. In 1953, Dr. Elizabeth Paterson (anesthesiologist) moved the house to a lot she owned on Tonkawa. The house was cut into two halves, front and back, to move. In 1953, the Robert R. Bunten family bought the house and lived there until 1962. The Buntens volunteered to teach Scottish country dancing at the University. A piper from Seattle lodged with them and brought about improvements to the attic (bedrooms and a bath were added in the unfinished attic area). The Buntens currently are renting out the house.

4. 2-J Hamburgers (3918 N. Lamar) – Original hamburger stand opened in 1953 under owner Patrick Morland and was called 2-J for two best friends named Jim (Jim Hasslocker and Jim Collins). In 1960, 2-J’s was selling over 160,000 hamburgers a month. Remember the sign? The last sign said “Sold over 6,000,000 hamburgers.” In the 1960s, 2-J’s became famous for their Toonerville hamburgers. An anteater and a merry-go-round attracted customers who could

enjoy the big oak tree and patio and cut-out Indians peeking over the fence. Morland obtained the fifth Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise in the United States and hired architect Kelly McAdams to design an addition for the franchise. McAdams took his fee in trade and for months, Rosedale residents found their neighbors, the McAdams family, eating hamburgers and chicken at 2-J's for dinner. In 1979, Jerald Ledbetter bought 2-J's (Morland sold KFC two years later to someone else). The merry-go-round was operated until parts could no longer be obtained; the carousel animals were restored and are now inside 2-J's for children to sit on while eating.

5. 3921 Medical Parkway (Alice Avenue) - This yard has several native Texas trumpet vines with abundant bright orange-red blossoms beginning in May. On the back fence are Queen's Crown (pink blossoms clusters) and butterfly vines (the seed pod is as beautiful as its yellow flower). Bernice and Edgar McCann moved here in 1946 (house built in 1938) and brought the trumpet vine from the old McCann family home in Williamson County in 1952.

6. 40th Street - Haul road into McGuire's Dairy which operated from about 1913 to 1937. McGuire's house, now gone, stood about 4001 – 4005 Sinclair with the barns and silo to the west. The dairy ran from 40th Street (north side) to 42nd Street (south side) and from the middle of Rosedale / Ramsey block west to Bull Creek Road. The dairy land to Shoal Creek was platted and the McGuire Subdivision with 75 lots by F.W. McGuire in 1939. Many houses in this subdivision were built by Calcasieu Lumber Company using several different contractors including Robert Clark and Hugo Nietzsche.

7. 42nd Street and Rosedale Avenue – Photo taken in 1938 showing improvements to a dirt street by a W.P.A. Program (Federal jobs program) crew.



W.P.A. street crew on 42nd Street and Rosedale in 1938

8. Ramsey Park (4301 Rosedale) – About 1900, Frank T. Ramsey purchased this parcel of land (known as Peterson's field) from C.A. Peterson. Frank T. Ramsey and his father, A.M. Ramsey, moved their 25-year old nursery business from Mahomet in Burnet County to Austin and made their headquarters at 45th and Guadalupe. Peterson's Field was one of several tracts of land around town used to grow trees, vines, shrubs, and flowers for the thriving nursery business. In the area of Ramsey Park was the caretaker's house. After the death of Frank T. and his wife, Annabel Sinclair Ramsey, three daughters (Jessie Murray, Euphie Taylor, and Winnie Nitschke) decided to subdivide and sell house lots. Finding a bank to loan money to women was difficult, and the deepening Depression also contributed to their difficulties, but in 1931 the Ramsey sisters finally began cutting roads and laying out lots. In 1933, the Ramsey sisters donated half the land for Ramsey Park to the City. The City then purchased the adjacent area. The park was dedicated in 1934. In 1939, the City placed paid leadership in the park and in 1942, the swimming pool was added. A very active Mother's Club sponsored summer festivals, ballgames, family picnics, dances, and other events, selling food, aprons, and potholders and raffling quilts to raise money for park benches, stage curtains, and sports equipment.



Ramsey Park in 1930s with rows of trees from Ramsey Nursery stock and cow (left side of photo)



Ramsey Park Mothers' Club dinner meeting

9. 4205 Ramsey – The plans for this house were drawn by Forrest Preece using a picture in a magazine for a guide. Built about 1935 by Forrest, J.S., and Calvin Preece and sold to A.M. Cory for \$2,650. The bricks used for the chimney came from the Sing (Chinese) Laundry building at 5th and Guadalupe and were purchased for \$11.00. The bricklayer was named John T. Clark.

10. 4215 Sinclair – Built about 1936 by A.B. Conlisk, according to granddaughter, Verna Warwick. Conlisk came to Austin after having worked in several other states (he built the New Manatee River Hotel in Florida, the Sacred Heart School in Cleveland, St. Anthony Church in Minneapolis, and the First Congregational Church in Coltree, Oklahoma). In Austin, he is best remembered for the front of the University of Texas Music Building. Most Conlisk homes in the Rosedale neighborhood were built of rock. The “Castle” at 4312 Ramsey was built by Conlisk as his home. Conlisk patented a beehive, wrote and published a book of poems, and as a youth could play the harmonica, piano, and guitar at the same time using foot controls of his invention. He moved to LaMarque, Texas, in 1947 and became well known for his round brick and stucco houses.



**Arlie Arthur "Burt" Conlisk,
Builder, architect, and inventor**

11. 4201 Sinclair – Moved from Guadalupe Street to this location in the late 1940s. Originally it had a flat roof.

12. 4310 Rosedale – Built about 1939, this house became the home of the Kenneth Threadgill family in the mid-1940s. Kenneth Threadgill, "The Father of Country Music in Austin," opened a gasoline station, grocery, and beer joint in February, 1933 (receiving the first liquor license in Travis County after the repeal of prohibition according to a newspaper article) at 6416 N. Lamar. Kenneth would sing and yodel for patrons and encourage young singers like Janis Joplin. His business was closed down by the fire marshal in 1973 but the building has been purchased, restored, and put back in business by another owner (Eddie Wilson, formerly an owner of the Armadillo World Headquarters music hall). Threadgill refused to do the traveling necessary to become nationally famous, preferring instead to stay home with his family. He took pride in this home on Rosedale and stayed there, even after his wife's death in 1976, until just a few years before his death in 1987.

13. 4303 Sinclair – The small front part of the house used to be the apartment (servants quarters) above the garage of the house next door at 4301. About 1955, Morris Moore had the top part taken off his garage at 4301 and moved next door (to a lot he also owned) to face west as living quarters for his mother. A two-story addition was built on to the back in the 1980s.

14. 1203 W. 44th Street – Built by Van C. Kelly about 1935. When fireman Doc (and wife Oressa) Boling decided to buy the house in 1936, Captain Brinkman in the Austin Fire Department loaned them \$2,500 at no interest. Captain Brinkman was a volunteer fireman who had driven the horses that pulled the old fire wagon. The Bolings repaid the loan but when

bachelor Brinkman died (a suicide at age 85), he willed the \$2,500 loan back to them as a gift. In 1949, when Doc's brother came to live with the Bolings, a large attic room was added. Doc Boling (named Doc because as a child he used to ride with the country doctor on his rounds) was the first captain of Station No. 12 at 2109 Hancock Drive. He put in 42 years with the Austin Fire Department before retiring in 1972. The house at 1203 was sold out of the family in 1981 for \$60,000.

15. 4414 Ramsey – Built about 1935 by J.V. Walden with Joe Wellman as stone mason and originally home to the H.G. Bryant family. The lot was obtained from Forrest Preece in exchange for a 1930 Chevy 2-door coach with wood top.

16. 4401 Sinclair – The “Spanish House” was built in 1936 by Forrest, J.S., and Calvin Preece for developer H.F. Nitschke who found this plan in a magazine. A.B. Conlisk built the hollow ceramic tile walls and did all the plaster work inside and the stucco work outside. The house has a courtyard and a Spanish style corner fireplace. The original roof was 36” long cedar shakes brought from Washington state by boat through the Panama canal to Houston. The garages were added later. On three corners of this intersection are coral yuccas.

17. 4518 Ramsey – Built in 1938 by Calcasieu Lumber Company and purchased for \$4,000 (house and lot) by the Gilbert Leifeste family in 1939. There was no paved street, no mail service then, and Rosedale Elementary School only had the first four grades. The house was enlarged in 1950 and again in 1980. The front porch was enclosed to make a stained glass studio; several panels of stained glass made by Mrs. Leifeste adorn this house. The Leifeste family still occupies the home.

18. 4513 Shoalwood – Built in 1939 by H.F., Green for Donald Stewart (“one story five room frame house and garage” for \$3,800) who sold the house and lot to its first residents, John and Alice Crawford. The Crawfords left this house in the late 1940s.

19. Burnet Road from 45th Street north – Originally called the Upper Georgetown Road, it ran from Austin to Georgetown. The old roadbed was in use as early as 1842 when Indians ambushed a party of five Austinites just north of the Lunatic Asylum (now called Austin State Hospital) in a grove of oak trees (probably between 49th and North Loop). Of the five men who were bringing a wagon load of corn from Brushy Creek, two (Pyron and Donovan) were killed. In 1852, the dirt road was declared a First Class Road and those who lived along it were required by the County Commissioners Court to maintain it. A road to the west was called Burnet Road because it ran from Austin (beginning about the 34th Street crossing of Shoal Creek) to the town of Burnet (earlier called Hamilton Valley). About 1937, the Upper Georgetown Road was renamed Burnet Road.

20. 4604 Rosedale – Built in 1939 or 1940 for Ellison Dickey whose name appears all over town in concrete curbs and sidewalks. Dickey began pouring concrete in Austin during the Depression. He also kept and sold beehives. Dickey lived here until the early 1970s.

21. Melrose Terrace Subdivision – Located between Burnet Road and midway between Ramsey and Sinclair, along 46th Street (5 to 6 lots either side of 46th) – This area was earlier part of the Hancock Dairy and later the Wallis Dairy. In 1917, Wallis sold 11 acres to Carl Assmann. For many years, this area was farmed by Bella and Felix Green, a black family who lived on the southwest corner of 38th and Wabash (now Medical Parkway). The Greens planted cotton with a mule team on several tracts along Burnet Road. In addition, Bella was an avid

fisherman and used to fish with other residents of the area (including John Wallis who lived in the log House on Sinclair and Ed Brown who lived in the caretaker's house in the Ramsey Nursery) at Fiset's Dam on Shoal Creek. It is possible that Ramsey Nursery also leased this land for nursery stock for a while. In 1936, a plat was filed by Cordelia Assmann to subdivide the area into 55 lots.

22. 4626 Burnet Road – Built about 1940 of yellow hollow ceramic tile for the Austin Mattress Factory (later Austin Awning and Bedding Manufacturers) formerly located at 4101 Guadalupe. Proprietors were Roy and Raymond Elsey. One of the Elsey men had a crippled arm but could throw a mattress up on his shoulder with ease with only one arm. The Elseys would take the cotton out, clean it, and put it in a new tick. The north garage of the motorcycle salvage business now occupies this building.

23. 4614 Shoalwood – Builder Roy Thigpen traded air conditioning work to developer H.F. Nitschke in exchange for several lots. About 1938, on one of those lots, a frame house with rock chimney and entry was built at 4614 for the Thigpen family. Later Thigpen added a basement under part of the house and protected it with a French drain. He also bricked the exterior of the house. The third generation of Thigpen descendants now lives in the house.

24. 2607 Great Oaks Parkway – Built in 1956 by Thomas Hinderer for two professional architects, Kelly and Nancy McAdams, who designed the house. Hinderer and his entire crew were Seventh Day Adventists. The McAdams designed a home to take advantage of the Shoal Creek overlook but had to deal with the underlying clay. The house sits on deep piers so that it can move with the clay. The basement walls are hung from the first floor and do not touch the concrete slab beneath the house where the cars are parked. The house also has a secure bomb shelter. On the property is an oak tree which has enveloped an elm tree and they grow together. The property has recently been sold out of the McAdams family.

Great Oaks Parkway, with its magnificent oak trees, was purchased and developed by Harris Brush. But the land south of Great Oaks on Erin, Edendale, Greenbriar, and 45th was purchased in the 1930s by Dr. R.V. and Jessie Ramsey Murray. They built a concrete and rock picnic table and used the land for holiday retreats. The area was later inherited and developed by their children, Vincent Murray, Annabel Thomas, Margaret Bailey, and Frances Leggett. This area had been part of the Jung Dairy before 1930.

25. 4615 Rosedale – Built in 1939 by T.B. Oglesby and purchased by the D.C. Spicer family. Mrs. Spicer was a local piano teacher for many years. About 1946, Thomas Pulliam, a builder, moved into the house next door (at 4617). At some time in the next ten years, Pulliam built a bomb shelter beneath the Spicer house which opened into a bedroom by a door in the floor.

1.

26. Bridges of Rosedale – Residents of Rosedale used to go blocks out of their way to cross Shoal Creek or Hancock Branch until the 1950s. The only bridges in general use were 34th Street and Koenig (Northland or 2222). If you lived on Great Oaks Parkway and went to church west of Shoal Creek, you had to drive up to Burnet Road and go either north to Koenig or south to 34th Street to cross Shoal Creek.

1. 34th Street over Shoal Creek - Built in 1938 (concrete slab with concrete railing) to replace one built in 1916. But 34th Street had long been a natural low-water crossing in use by Indians long before Anglo settlers began using it. In the 1800s, much of the firewood and charcoal from the hills arrived in Austin by this crossing.

2. 38th Street over Shoal Creek – Built in 1955 (concrete slab and girder); widened in 1975.

3. 45th Street over Shoal Creek – Built in 1958 (concrete slab) by Larson and Pugh (we are told that Larson's daughter married Pugh's son making the builders in-laws). There was no earlier low-water crossing here.

4. Hancock Drive over Shoal Creek - In 1961, the present bridge on Hancock Drive (concrete culvert) was built but it replaced an earlier low-water concrete bridge (see photo) built about 1932. Does anyone know what was here before the 1932 low-water bridge was built? It is believed that John Hancock had a low-water crossing here before the Civil War to help haul cotton to the gin and log barn he built on the northwest corner of the present intersection of Hancock and Shoal Creek Boulevard. Franz Fiset, who purchased this farmland from Hancock, and Ramsey Nursery when it acquired the use of much of this area, may have used the crossing.

5. Shoal Creek Boulevard over Hancock Branch – Rosedale has a second major creek in its area – Hancock Branch – which crosses Burnet Road a block south of North Loop. The south end of the shopping center is built over the branch but the waterway emerges north of Hancock Drive near the old Americana Theater and runs southwest into Shoal Creek in the 4700 block. Shoal Creek Boulevard became a major neighborhood street in 1953 with the construction of the concrete slab bridge over Hancock Branch. Prior to 1953, all traffic had to go to Burnet Road to exit the neighborhood and Hancock Branch was a favored dumping site for neighborhood trash.

6. Hancock Drive over Hancock Branch – In 1960, the concrete culvert bridge over Hancock branch on Hancock Drive was completed.



Old Bridge at Hancock over Shoal Creek, 1944

27. 4619 Sinclair – Built about 1941 by Wayne Hudson who also built 4700, 4702, and 4618. The Charles Schuck family lived at 4619 for many years. Their daughter, Betty Schuck McCowan was chosen Mrs. Texas in the 1950s. Dr. Banner Gregg purchased the property and during his ownership, it burned (about 1983 or 1984). It is rumored that the long-vacant lot has recently been purchased.

28. 4701 Shoal Creek Boulevard - Built in 1940 by Elbert J. Hood for developer H.F. Nitschke. Melford Dickerson bought the house and three lots and added a well and stables. He sold it to the local Falstaff beer distributor, Shirmer Mueller, who added a den and carport. Dr. Sigman Hayes bought the house in 1954, moving from 4603 Sinclair where he had lived for a number of years. Hayes converted the stables into a guest house and dug a bomb shelter beneath the house. Dr. Hayes opened a family practice office at 4708 Burnet Road in 1951 or 1952 and cared for many in the neighborhood until his retirement in 1973 but the house has recently been sold out of the family. There is a large old cedar (ashe juniper) tree in the northwest corner of the property.

29. Scout Hut, end of 48th Street at Rosedale – The Rosedale PTA was very active in organizing cub, boy, brownie, and girl scout troops and by 1948, Pack 11 cub scouts suggested a meeting hut on the school grounds. The school board agreed and in September, 1948, the new hut was used for the first time by the scouts. At that time, Pack 11 had 6 dens. But the PTA and its LAH (Lend a Hand) mothers' club had also organized and was sponsoring girl scout troops (31 members) and brownies (53 members). The new hut, however, was for the cub scouts who

put on a circus to help pay the mortgage. The cub scouts fully paid the rest of the mortgage by renting the hut every weekday morning to a private first grade (parents whose children did not turn 6 by September 1, but who were ready for first grade hired Mrs. Roberta Hartung to teach their children for a year). The hut was in good use by the cubs whose membership in 1950 grew to 107 members in 13 dens. Most of the graduates of Rosedale cub scouts joined Troop 35 of the boy scouts, also sponsored by Rosedale School, who used the hut for meetings. Even with the new addition to Rosedale Elementary School in 1949, classrooms were so crowded that the school board asked the scouts for the use of the hut for classes. By the 1960s, the scout hut was also used by brownie Troop 30 and girl scout Troop 180, whose leaders included, among others, Mrs. Doren Eskew, Mrs. Richard Terrio, and Mrs. Billye McAdams Muecke. Some girl scouts, including Donna Dietrich, sold so many girl scout cookies to Rosedale residents that they were awarded free tuition to Camp Texlake. All Rosedale scouting uniforms, books, and equipment were purchased from Scarbrough's Department Store at 6th and Congress, downtown. The scout hut still stands but is used for storage by Rosedale School.

30. 4804 Sinclair – Designed by architect Hugo F. Kuehne for J.L. McGarity and built in 1941. The McGaritys lived here until about 1953. The house was rented out for several years until 1958 when the Norman Bryant family purchased it and continue to occupy it. One of the cupboards in this house has a secret drawer.

31. 4812 Woodview – Built about 1950, this house was home to “Cactus” Richard S. and Jewell Pryor in the mid-1950s. Cactus, referred to as the “Bob Hope of Austin,” had begun his broadcasting career 10 years earlier. By the time he moved to Woodview, he had already become a legendary humorist and was part owner of Cacti's Nightclub at 2918 Guadalupe. The house was enlarged dramatically in 1984.

32. Hillwin Circle - Only one block long sandwiched between Hancock Branch and Shoal Creek, Hillwin Circle has several lawns of colorful native Texas wildflowers. It is believed that J. Frank Dobie once owned this area and intended to build a country home here.

33. West 49th Street at intersections with Sinclair and Shoalwood – In these yards are large old live oak trees, some of the oldest and largest in Austin. They are remnants of a large grove of oak trees which extended north to Lawnmont and to Burnet Road to the east. In the area now of the El Presidente Apartments stood John Hancock's homeplace, “The Oaks,” built in 1870 and later used by the Brown School until demolished in the late 1960s. By the way, the area along 49th Street has spectacular late afternoon airshows when the nighthawks (bull bats) return from South America (May-October).

34. Rosedale Elementary School and P.T.A. – The fast-developing Rosedale neighborhood needed an elementary school and in 1938, residents living adjacent to a two-block tract of land on West 49th were asked to sign an agreement for a school to be built. Part of the agreement stipulated that the land could be used only for a school; its use could not be changed in the future. The new school, with 8 classrooms, a principal's office, and a teachers' lounge opened in September 1939, with 167 pupils and four teachers under Mr. H.A. Porter principal and Miss Margaret Faubion (later Mrs. White), building principal. The P.T.A. organized that same month with 89 members. During that first year, the student enrollment went well over 200 and more teachers were added even though the school handled only the first four grades. A very active P.T.A. helped build a library, purchased linoleum flooring, made slip covers for the couch in the lounge, and bought gravel for the walkways among other things. They also organized carnivals, sponsored cub, brownie, girl, and boy scout troops, and assisted needy students.

In the mid-1940s, Rosedale was in the spotlight for an \$18,000 experiment in lighting, decoration, and seating (we have been told Life Magazine carried an article about this experiment. Does anyone know the month, day, and year of that article?). The information gained was used in the “ultra-modern” addition made to the school in 1949. At that time, 10 new classrooms, an auditorium-cafeteria combination, and a gym were added to the southeast side, and Rosedale finally accepted grades one through six. That year the P.T.A. had nearly 500 members.

Principal Margaret Faubion White served Rosedale from 1939 to 1966 and was followed by long-time Rosedale teacher and administrator, Roberta Hartung. As the neighborhood matured, fewer children enrolled at Rosedale until by 1980 the school was threatened with closure. But because of the deed restrictions, the school board decided to adapt the school for seriously handicapped students by day and classrooms for the community education adult courses by night.

35. 4811 Sinclair – Built about 1849 by Martin and Elizabeth Moore. The old farmstead contains a large log house, log barn, rock summer kitchen with root cellar, and a hand-dug well. A Texas Historical Marker stands in front of the house giving its history. This house will be open for touring Saturday, May 14, 1994, 10 AM to 3 PM. If weather permits, there will be a display of family quilts as well.

36. Parking lot at Lynnwood and Hancock – At the southeast edge of this parking lot, beside 2204B West 49th, is a native Drummond Clematis vine which covers a large area of brush and ground. In the summer and fall, this vine has dry seed fruits with tails covered in long white silky hairs, giving it the common name of Old Man’s Beard.

37. Fire Station at 2109 Hancock – Built in 1949, the station was Austin’s twelfth fire station. The first crew was headed by Captain F.D. “Doc” Boling and included John H. Depew, Jr., a champion in softball, skating, and heavyweight boxing. Our fire station had a 1929 LaFrance firetruck (600 gallon) with chain drive and wooden wheels. Captain Boling planted two pecan trees that first year which now bear a large crop each season. In 1975, the City threatened to close Station No. 12. The Rosedale Neighborhood Association mounted a vigorous campaign which succeeded in keeping the fire station open. About 1986, the building received its first air conditioning and at that time, the door was widened to accommodate modern firetrucks (we now have a 1991 firetruck). Today the fire station has 3 crews of 4 persons each who make about 850 runs per year, 90% of which are medical. We are lucky to have the fireman with the most years in the fire department serving at our station: Charles “Daddieo” Bryant has 40 years and is trying to beat the record set by his father-in-law, Doc Boling of 42 years. The station sports a siren tower on top and has remarkable copper gutters and downspouts.

38. THE MURDER OF BLACKSTONE DAVIS, told by Roy W. Davis – If you stand where Davis Hardware is (now Sound Warehouse) and look southwest, you’re looking at where my grandfather was killed, right along Burnet Road. It was about four in the afternoon on a day in 1881 that he left his home (in the vicinity of present-day Northwest Park). He was walking since his buggy was in the shop in Fiskville for repair. Blackstone was going to the State Hospital (then called the Lunatic Asylum) to collect for 200 bushels of corn he had sold them previously. He also had a 20 dollar gold pieced his wife had given him to pay taxes with as well as about seven dollars of his own.

He arrived at the State Hospital too late to get paid for the corn so continued on to town. Along the way he met an acquaintance coming from town in a buggy. Blackstone offered to buy him “all the beer he could drink” if he would turn around and go back to town. The man declined and Blackstone continued on to town.

Early the next morning a milkman saw a man lying on the road. When he saw the man was dead, he went to town to tell the authorities. At about the same time, Blackstone’s wife was sending their sons out to search for him. My father, age 15, was the only one who had a horse ready at the time and was sent to search the pasture along Shoal Creek. The two older boys, age 19 and 17, walked and arrived at the body about the same time as the people who came from town. Tracks and a bottle indicated that Blackstone and another man had walked from town and stopped at that point and emptied the last from a whisky bottle. The other man started back to town and Blackstone started on home. However, the other then turned and slipped up in back of Blackstone and hit him in the head with a rock. Then as Blackstone lay face down, he hit him again with a second rock to make sure he was dead. He was face down, his pants pockets turned inside out when found. A man was later arrested and tried but found not guilty. The murder remains unsolved to this day.

Corrections to 1993 Rosedale Ramble Notes: from a descendant of the Ramsey family who developed the Rosedale subdivision: the name Rosedale came from the Rosedale Arbor Vitae, a cedar tree and not a rosebush; 4501 Rosedale was not the Dittrich family home.

Photos: Seiders Springs, Ramsey Park with the cow, 42nd Street under construction, Hancock Drive bridge courtesy of the Austin History Center; Ramsey Park Mothers’ Club meeting courtesy of Mrs. Charlie Joyce; A.B. Conlisk courtesy of granddaughter Mrs. Verna Warwick.

IF YOU NOTICE MISTAKES IN THE NOTES OR IF YOU CAN ADD OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOUSES, FLORA, STREETS, OR FENCES IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, PLEASE CALL KAREN COLLINS AT 323-2470.

1994 Rosedale Ramble Map

