

# History of Mesquite



Agent A.R. Alcott, an engineer for the Texas & Pacific Railroad, filed the first plat for the township of Mesquite with Dallas County on May 22, 1873. In less than two months later, the first train to pass through the area came through the community. The train was traveling from Shreveport to Dallas and it caused quite a stir among the new citizens, for without the trains, they might never have come to Mesquite.

No one really knows why the town was named "Mesquite." Speculation,

however, is that it was named from the abundant amount of Mesquite trees that dotted the landscape. In the 1870s, the town proper consisted mainly of a saloon, a blacksmith shop, a confectionery, the post office and depot, and four homes. The businesses, which were wooden, faced Front Street, the first street in the central area.



It would be 14 years before the town would seek incorporation. In December 3, 1887, an election was held in which 25 votes were cast for the move and 14 against it. Mesquite was the second community to incorporate (Lancaster was the first) outside of Dallas proper. The first official leadership election of the newly incorporated town was held in April, 1888, and J.E. Russell was elected mayor. Others such as R.S. Kimbrough, J.C. Rugel, T.L. Paschall, and G.B. Gross, were all involved in the early days of the city.

As commerce expanded, citizens' rumblings about the creation of an official town square grew louder. Those having business in the town had already begun tying their horses up to hitching posts at the rear of the buildings to shield the creatures from the loud trains. Plus, a new brick plant opening caused many of the business leaders to want to replace older, wooden structures with more "modern" brick buildings. Nearly 30 years after the town's beginning, a public square became the center point of Mesquite. Such a move opened more space for business and the town grew.



Mesquite grew slowly in population. In the first U.S. Census, which was taken in 1890, Mesquite had a population of 135. Ten years later, it had only grown by 270 people. By 1960, about 27,345 people called Mesquite home. The estimated 2010 population provided by nctcog.org is 139,550.