

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

Historic: Big Spring
and/or common: White Rock Spring, Bryan Spring, Sam Houston Spring
Date: November 18, 2015

2. Location

Address: 1121 Pemberton Hill Road (aka 925 Pemberton Hill Road)
Location/neighborhood: Mapsco 57-L (west of intersection of Pemberton Hill Road and Sarah Lee Drive)
Block and lot: Blk 6239 land survey: John Beeman Survey Abstract No. 97
tract size: 15.42 acres

3. Current Zoning

current zoning: PD 883

4. Classification

<i>Category</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Present Use</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>museum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>district</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>public</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>occupied</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>agricultural</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>park</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>building(s)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>private</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>unoccupied</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>commercial</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>residence</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>structure</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>both</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>work in</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>educational</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>religious</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>site</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>progress</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>entertainment</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>scientific</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>object(s)</i>	<i>Acquisition</i>	<i>Accessibility</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>government</i>	<i>transportation</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>in progress</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>yes: restricted</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>industrial</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>other, specify</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>being</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes: unrestricted</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>military</i>	
	<i>consider'd</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>no</i>		

5. Ownership

Current Owner: City of Dallas - TWM
Contact: Sarah Standifer **Ph:** 214-671-9500
Address: 1500 Marilla St., 6BS **City:** Dallas **State:** TX **Zip:** 75201

6. Form Preparation

Date: November 18, 2015
Name & Title: Marsha Prior, Planner
Organization: Sustainable Development & Construction – Historic Preservation
Contact: marsha.prior@dallascityhall.com

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide): local state national
 National Register
 H.P.L. Survey (CBD) A B C D Recorded TX Historic Ldmk
 Oak Cliff TX Archaeological Ldmk
 Victorian Survey
 Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase ____ high ____ medium ____ low

For Office Use Only

Date Rec'd: _____ *Survey Verified:* Y N *by:* _____ *Field Check by:* _____ *Petitions Needed:* Y N
Nomination: *Archaeological* *Site* *Structure(s)* *Structure & Site District*

8. Historic Ownership

Original owner: John Beeman, 1842 – 1856 (death)
Significant later owner(s): Margaret Beeman Bryan, 1856-1880 (sold)
Edward Case Pemberton, 1880 – 1914 (death)
Mary E. Pemberton et al. 1914 - ca. 1930s – (widow and administratrix of estate)
Edward Pemberton, ca. 1930s – ca. 1950s (sold)
Oliver Pemberton, ca. 1950s – 1966 (death)
Lola Pemberton (widow), 1966 – ca. 1973 (death)
Phyllis Fort Skinner (daughter) ca. 1973 – ca. 2002 (death)
Matthew Fort et al., 2003 (administrator)
Larry Koehler, 2004
City of Dallas, 2004 – present

9. Construction Dates

Original: Not Applicable
Alterations/additions: Known alterations to the landscape began ca. 1868 with building of log cabin and cultivation. Major alterations to landscape occurred in the mid-1900s from gravel mining and infill with construction debris. In the 1980s, a sewage line was installed cutting across the site north to south.

10. Architect

Original construction: Not Applicable

Alterations/additions: Not Applicable

11. Site Features

- Big Spring
- Site 41DL72
- 150–200 year old Bur Oak Tree
- Drilled well with concrete ring dated 1934
- Walnut tree with metal spike denoting 1942 flood level
- Old pecan tree grove
- T-2 Pleistocene Terrace
- Location of Edward Case Pemberton dairy operation, and Depression-era outbuildings and corral/animal pen
- Mesquite tree near assumed location of Bryan’s cabin

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

excellent

deteriorated

unaltered

good

ruins

altered

fair

unexposed

Check one:

original site

Moved (date _____)

The Big Spring Historic and Environmental Conservation Easement (Big Spring Site) is a 15.42 acre of land that is part of a larger 320-acre tract claimed by the early Dallas pioneer, John Beeman in 1842. Located in southeast Dallas, the site sits between Oak Creek (also known as Bryan’s Slough) to the west, Pemberton Hill Road to the east, Highway 175 to the north, and Elam Road to the south (Figure 1). Oak Creek meets White Rock Creek approximately one-half mile south where the two creeks combine and flow into the Trinity River. Overall, the area has a rural feel with trees, brush, grasses, streams, the spring itself, and a sparse built environment. The area is not pristine, however. Human activities have greatly impacted the natural environment. Prior to the historic period, the area would have contained a forest with Post oaks, pecan, walnut, cedar elm, juniper, box elder, bois d’arc, and hackberry trees interspersed with grassy clearings, water marshes, and ponds (Dalbey 2013b, 2015b).

During prehistoric times, human impact on the land was minimal as populations manufactured stone tools, and possibly gathered vegetation, hunted, prepared food, and set up temporary shelters. This use of the land occurred for over 2,500 years. When European American settlers arrived in the 1840s, they encountered bobwhite, quail, pheasant, meadowlark, field sparrow, sage grouse, lark bunting, various species of turtle, cottontail, swamp rabbit, squirrel, muskrat raccoon, gray fox, red wolf, and white tailed deer. Their arrival marked an era when human activity took on a more discernible impact. Over time, ground was ploughed; crops cultivated; houses and outbuildings constructed; and fences erected. Adjacent to the site, old trails or wagon roads were paved, and new roads constructed. The greatest impact to the site, however, was due to gravel mining that occurred in the mid-1900s, disturbing the topography, vegetation, and archeological sites.

After John Beeman’s death, his daughter Margaret Beeman Bryan inherited 161.6 acres of the northern portion of the Big Spring Tract (Survey 4A) where the spring is located (Figure 2) (Toyer 2013b). The Big Spring Site, which is the subject of this Landmark nomination, falls within the eastern portion of Margaret Beeman Bryan’s inheritance (Figure 3). Although the Big Spring Site is 15.42 acres, the following description of the larger area provides a physical and cultural context to the prehistory and history of the area.

The lower elevation riverine western and central portion of John Beeman’s Big Spring tract (not a part of this Landmark designation) contains alluvial soils (annually deposited fertile floodplain soil), and includes a recovering riverine forest and Oak Creek. The creek supports beaver, otters, fish, and fresh water mollusks. An archeological site (41DL73) was originally recorded by Forrest Kirkland in 1940. As late as 2010, part of this area was under cultivation, but since then farming has been abandoned (Dalbey 2013a, 2014, 2015a, 2015b; Naumann et al. 2013).

Overview of the upper eastern portion of original John Beeman Big Spring tract, including the Big Spring Site Landmark designation

The east part of the northern half of Beeman's Big Spring tract includes the actual spring named Big Spring in a deed, and other natural and cultural features of interest, including old growth trees, archeological site 41DL72, and possibly remnants 41DL73 that was recorded (Dalbey 2015b), and may have been destroyed. The eastern most portion of the tract consists of a high Pleistocene age T-2 terrace (Dalbey 2008, 2015c; Shuler 1935; Slaughter 1966) that has been reported along the Trinity River from as far north as Denton, Texas, to south of the McCommas Bluff in southern Dallas County, a distance of approximately 100 miles. The higher T-2 terrace within the Big Spring Site that rises up to 40 feet above the spring consists of mostly sand and gravel that supported a Post oak savanna grassland (Dalbey 2013a, 2013b). Over 100 Pleistocene species, dating back to 143,000 years ago would have characterized the area indicating a different environment that was possibly seasonally warmer (Dalbey 2015c). Some of the Pleistocene species include megafauna such as Columbian mammoth, sabre-toothed cats (*Smilodon* sp.), camel, horse, tapir, antelope, dire wolves, large ground sloths, short-faced bears, glyptodons (large armadillo-like animals), and giant beaver to list a few (Dalbey 2008; Shuler 1923, 1935; Slaughter 1960, 1966; Slaughter et al. 1962). These species compare to the famous Rancholabrean fauna of the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles, California (a National Natural Landmark) that date later (Dalbey 2016).

The prehistoric Site 41DL72 runs through most of the Big Spring Site. The area surrounding the spring includes a large bur oak tree, approximately four feet in diameter, estimated to be 150 to 200 years old. This tree would have been growing when Margaret Beeman Bryan and John Neely Bryan were living on this property. It has been recognized for its age by the Texas Historic Tree Coalition. Other trees that represent features of interest include a walnut tree with a railroad spike driven into the trunk (Figure 4). The spike marks the height of the 1942 Trinity River flood waters (Toyer 2015). There is also a lone mesquite tree that stands near the assumed location of the cabin that Margaret Beeman Bryan and John Neely Bryan occupied, and there is a grove of old pecan trees toward the north eastern boundary of the Big Spring Site (Figure 5). This grove contains trees that are four feet in diameter (i.e., 100+ years old) (Dalbey 2015b).

The Big Spring Site also contains features or locations that mark nineteenth and twentieth century economic and recreational activities. Near the old pecan grove is where Edward Case Pemberton had his dairy operation at the turn of the twentieth century. A concrete ring with "1934" inscribed, marks where a well once was placed for use in the dairy operation and is the only remnant of the that operation (Figure 6). This same area is where a few outbuildings and a corral stood during the twentieth century Great Depression. When the corral was taken down, the posts were in filled with dirt (Pemberton 2006). The most recent use for this same location is an outdoor recreational area with a fire pit that was traditionally used by the Pemberton family as a picnic area with tables, chairs, and a makeshift grill using a halved 55-gallon drum (Figure 7).

13. Historical Significance

Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important personages, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.

Prehistoric Period

Based on a small sample of lithics recovered from a portion of 41DL72 that is located in the Big Spring Site, this area has been occupied for over 2,500 years. The oldest lithic artifacts discovered at the Big Spring Site are several Yarbrough points associated with the Late Archaic period, which ranges from 1050 BC to AD 700. Dart points associated with the Transitional Archaic (AD 200-700) (Edgewood, Zephyr, and a reused Carrollton biface) have also been recovered. Representing phases I and II of the Late Prehistoric (AD 800 to 1600) are several arrow points. Although the archeological record establishes a long phase of human occupation, it is not known at this time if it was a continuous occupation that evolved over time. It is evident, though, that the stone tools represent several different cultural groups that occupied the site through time (Dalbey 2013a, 2014, 2015b; Naumann et al. 2013).

41DL72 is an expansive archeological site that extends beyond the boundaries of the Big Spring Site. A recent archeological investigation was performed on a portion of 41DL72 that is located south of the Big Spring Site on land now associated with the Texas Horse Park (THP). This portion of 41DL72 is less disturbed than that which lies within the Big Spring Site where gravel mining was conducted. This southern portion contains a greater sample of lithics, ceramics, and faunal remains. Based on analysis, 41DL72 is acknowledged to be a prehistoric hunting camp that was occupied from at least the Middle Archaic period. The intensity of occupation increased during the Late Archaic and Late Prehistoric periods, and it was occupied on a seasonal basis. The faunal remains indicate that the populations relied on white-tailed deer for subsistence, with freshwater mussels and turtle rounding out their diet. A relatively large sample of lithic tools manufactured from chert, suggests that either the later populations were highly mobile or had established trade relations with groups outside of the area where chert is more prolific. It is reported that Big Spring was located near a Native American route connecting a Trinity River crossing to eastern Texas (Dalbey 2013a, 2014, 2015a, 2015b; Goodmaster 2015; Toyer 2015).

Historic Period

The John Beeman Family

Historically, the Big Spring Site is located on land associated with Dallas County's earliest permanent settlers, the Beeman families; the founder of Dallas, John Neely Bryan; and possibly Sam Houston, the President of the Republic of Texas. Although colonization occurred under Spanish and Mexican rule, not long after Texas was recognized as a republic in 1836, settlement, especially among the European American population from the United States, began in earnest. The Republic readily contracted with land granting agencies such as the Mercer and Peters colonies. The Peters Colony was largely responsible for the settlement of north central Texas, especially the Three Forks area of the Trinity River. Heads of families and single men alike were tempted

by the promise of free land for the price of improvements. Thus, large numbers of extended families and their friends took off from various states to head toward Texas. Although the Peters Colony had a significant impact on settlement, not everyone migrating to this portion of Texas was a Peters, nor Mercer, Colonist—including John Neely Bryan and the Beeman families. The Beemans had already migrated to Texas, and John Neely Bryan had visited with plans to return to the present-day Dallas area (Connor 1959; Dallas Historical Society 2005; Ericson 2015; Lang and Long 2013; Wade 2015).

John Neely Bryan was born in Fayetteville, Tennessee in 1810. He studied law, but moved to Arkansas in 1833, where he lived among and traded with Native Americans. Moving further west, he acted as a land agent for John Drennen and David Thompson, the founders of Van Buren, Arkansas, whom Bryan had known in Tennessee. He traveled west across the Kiamichi Mountains in Indian Territory and into Texas where he clerked at Holland Coffee's Trading House on Washita Bend of the Red River. Bryan first arrived in the present Dallas area in 1839 where he set up camp on the east side of the Trinity River (near Elm and Houston streets in downtown Dallas). Bryan's chosen location was near a point in the Trinity River that was relatively easy to cross, and was also close to Indian trails that would facilitate travel to and from the area. Bryan then left for Arkansas to settle his affairs, returning to Dallas in November 1841 whereby he commenced to establish a town (Dallas Historical Society 2005; Hazel 1997; Toyer 2013b, 2015).

Meanwhile, a group of families, including John and Emily Hunnicutt Beeman and their children; James Beeman (John's half-brother) and his wife and children; and John S. Beeman (John's and James' nephew) left Calhoun, Illinois, in 1840 for Texas. In 1837, before leaving for Texas, John Beeman purchased a land scrip from the Toby and Brother Company. Upon reaching northeast Texas, the Beeman entourage set up a temporary home. In 1841 and 1842, most of the men from the 1840 group of Illinois immigrants, plus many others from northeast Texas, participated in several volunteer militia campaigns to the Three Forks area. The militia established Bird's Fort in the fall of 1841 on the West Fork of the Trinity River in present-day north Arlington to protect the frontier and Military Road in accordance with the 1838 Act of the Texas Legislature. Volunteering for military campaigns was a common practice among newly arrived male settlers. Their travels allowed them to explore the north central Texas region before deciding where to stake their claim. When Bird's Fort was completed, John Beeman gathered his extended family and friends to join others who were settling near the new fort (J. Beeman 1886; Brown 1887; *Dallas Morning News* 1935; Toyer 2013c, 2015).

Seeing the Bird's Fort settlers as potential recruits for his new town, Bryan traveled there, hoping to convince them to join him. He found the Beemans, as well as others, eager to leave. Although the threat of attack and presence of malaria were of concern, the newly created Peters Colony had expanded into Bird's Fort territory, forcing the settlers to leave. The John, James, and John S. Beeman families set out in an ox cart, following an old trail that led eastward toward the Dallas vicinity. Wishing to avoid settling within the current boundaries of the Peters Colony, the Beemans traveled toward White Rock Creek, stopping at a Post oak grove near today's Munger Place on April 4, 1842. John Beeman went on to claim 640 acres of land a little further east, along the western edge of White Rock Creek (near today's Interstate 30 and Dolphin

Road (Figure 3). Nearby was a trail that continued to lead eastward across White Rock Creek. Although John Beeman had intentionally settled outside of the Peters Colony domain, his head right was later encompassed by the colony when it expanded (J. Beeman 1886; S. Beeman 1927a, 1927b; Brown 1887:12-13; *Dallas Morning News* 1902, 1935; Harper 2006; Toyer 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2015).

For protection, the Beemans immediately constructed a block house near the center of a pecan grove. It is believed to be the only one ever built in Dallas County. Although no sketch is known to exist, the lower portion of the house was 15 square feet with the upper portion projecting two feet on all sides. The purpose of this top heavy construction was to prevent the enemy from scaling the wall. A typical blockhouse also includes narrow openings on the upper portion from which to shoot firearms (Figure 8) (J. Beeman 1886:9; Brown 1887; Cochran 1928; Lewis Publishing Company 1892; Toyer 2013a).

In addition to the blockhouse, the Beemans built a permanent cabin, established a cemetery nearby, and later built a grist mill on the west bank of White Rock Creek at present-day Military Parkway. The original entrance to the cemetery was on Mingo Street (the address for Beeman Memorial Cemetery is now 3598 Osage Circle). In early 1843, James Beeman built a cabin approximately one mile southwest of John Beeman's blockhouse. The Beeman families appear to have been living fairly well during this time. They planted corn, pumpkins, and peas; gathered wild rye; and hunted buffalo and other wild game (J. Beeman 1886; James 1996; Lewis Publishing Company 1892; Toyer 2013c, 2015).

Unbeknownst to John Beeman, he had staked his claim on the Thomas Lagow Survey. Not wishing to move, in 1844 he made a bond to purchase the 640 acres for \$1.00 per acre from Thomas Lagow. James, however, decided to lay claim to a 640-acre tract on the east side of White Rock Creek where Oak Creek crossed his tract. Lagow died in 1845 and the deed was delivered by the administrator of Lagow's estate in 1850. John Beeman had also increased his landholdings in 1842 when he used his scrip and head right to claim three 320-acre tracts on the east side of White Rock Creek and one 320-acre tract on the west side of the Trinity River. When John Beeman died in 1856, his executor, William Hunnicutt, referred to the three tracts east of White Rock Creek by prominent features. Survey 1A was the Prairie Tract, 2A was the Cedar Brake Tract, and 4A was the Big Spring Tract (Figure 9). The Big Spring Site is located within John Beeman's Survey 4A (J. Beeman 1886; Toyer 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2015).

In August 1843, soon after the Beemans were well established, Sam Houston and party set out from Crockett, Texas, headed for Bird's Fort. As President of the Republic of Texas, Houston had hopes of meeting with East Texas tribes for treaty negotiations. During the course of their journey, they crossed Dallas County, stopping to interact with the Beemans, John Neely Bryan, and other colonists. The Sam Houston party may have camped at the Big Spring Site, though irrefutable evidence is currently lacking. Edward Parkinson, a member of Houston's party, kept a diary while on the trip. Although the diary provides invaluable information, at times, key details are vague or missing. Unfortunately, this is the case during the time in which they were in the Big Spring vicinity (Parkinson n.d.).

On August 12, Sam Houston and party came to Kingsboro (present-day Kaufman) to the east of Dallas County. From there, they headed northwest to fight off dense brush and cross the East Fork of the Trinity River. They camped that night by the fork. The next day, August 13, the company cleared a path through thickets for two miles and camped at White Rock Springs, one mile from the confluence of White Rock Creek and Trinity River. The following day, they were met by “settlers from the colony.” They all crossed White Rock Creek and went to one of the colonist’s cabins (Parkinson does not name the colonist). There, they were “regaled with an acceptable and plentiful supply of buttermilk.” Parkinson stayed the night with this colonist, allowing his injured horse to rest. Another party member, John Reagan, had fallen ill and was taken to John Beeman’s cabin to rest. The remainder of the party went on to Cedar Springs. Parkinson left the colonist’s cabin and spent two nights at John Neely Bryan’s place near today’s downtown Dallas. Afterwards, he left to catch up with Houston’s party (Parkinson n.d.).

Based on Parkinson’s diary, it is clear that the Beemans were involved in the events surrounding Sam Houston in mid-August 1843. Parkinson specifically notes that his ill comrade was taken to John Beeman’s cabin. James Beeman reveals in his memoir that he agreed to serve as Sam Houston’s guide to Bird’s Fort. It is not clear, however, as to whose cabin the party visited for buttermilk and with whom Parkinson stayed for an extra night. It seems that James Beeman’s cabin can be ruled out because he had most likely moved to the east side of White Rock Creek by that time to vacate Lagow’s property.

There is also a lack of definitive proof that the party camped on John Beeman’s Survey 4A, the Big Spring tract. Parkinson refers to, “White Rock Springs,” noting it was a mile from the confluence of the Trinity River and White Rock Creek, which puts it in the same vicinity as Big Spring. It is certainly possible that the spring went by two names. The Beemans may have called it Big Spring, while others used a geographic name to note its proximity to White Rock Creek or a descriptive name to describe the chalky white rock for which it was associated. It should also be noted, though, that there were other springs in the area. Thus, without a document or map that clearly indicates that Big Spring and White Rock Spring are one and the same, it is necessary to exercise caution in assuming that the site is significant for its association with Sam Houston.

The Margaret Beeman Bryan and John Neely Bryan Family

John and Emily Hunnicutt Beeman had 11 children, one of them being a daughter, Margaret. On February 26, 1843, Margaret married John Neely Bryan. The family lived in a series of cabins near the present-day Dallas County Courthouse. After Bryan agreed to sell his real property to Alexander Cockrell in 1852, they temporarily exchanged residences, thus, the Bryan family moved to Mountain Creek. Approximately two years later, they returned to the cabin that was located at the southwest corner of Commerce and Houston streets. Cockrell built his own home at the foot of Commerce Street on the river (Toyer 2015, 2016).

John Beeman died in 1856. His 640-acre homestead had been placed in wife Emily’s name soon after he received the deed from Lagow’s estate and she later dispersed that to her children. John Beeman’s estate included three of the four 320-acre tracts

originally acquired with his scrip and headright grant, and two additional 320-acre tracts purchased from their grantees. These and other assets were appraised by the executor, brother-in-law William Hunnicutt, and subdivided in nearly equal shares among his 10 surviving children. Margaret received 161.6 acres out of the Big Spring tract. Her portion, being the upper part of the original tract, included the spring. Around 1868, Margaret and John Neely Bryan moved to the Big Spring tract where they lived for nearly ten years. John Neely Bryan built a cabin where he, Margaret, and their three children—Lizzie, Alexander Luther, and Edward Tarrant—lived. An older son, John Neely, Jr., with his wife, Sarah Thompson, relocated a cabin from Dallas to the Big Spring Site and lived close by until 1872 when John, Jr. left for south central Texas. The 1870 Agricultural Census of Dallas County shows that John Neely Bryan had ten acres of improved tilled land and 150 acres of woodland. Also listed were three horses, two working oxen, four milch cows, and twelve swine. John Jr. had ten acres tilled and fifteen acres unimproved, plus six horses, six milch cows, ten other cows, and twelve swine on an adjacent tract rented from one of Margaret's siblings who had inherited the south portion of the Big Spring Survey. In 1877, John Neely Bryan was admitted to the State Lunatic Asylum in Austin. He died there in September that same year and was buried in the Asylum Cemetery (Cockrell 1944; Dallas Historical Society 2005; Harper 2006; Toyer 2013a, 2013c, 2015, 2016).

In his 1932 memoirs, *A History of Early Dallas*, Frank Marion Cockrell speaks of John Neely Bryan's final eight years at Big Spring, referring to the setting as a picturesque place surrounded by timber and the sound of the "gushing spring from the hillside." Bryan is described as having lost interest in the town that he established, but remaining very patriotic and maintaining sobriety. In 1872, Bryan accompanied by his two sons, visited his daughter Lizzie in Illinois. Sometime around 1874, he travelled a much shorter distance to visit his nephew, Jim Bryan, Jr., at Mountain Creek where his nephew was in charge of the Cockrell Ranch. There, he seemed at peace as he rode about the ranch and assisted with chores.

The Pemberton Families

Margaret sold her land to Edward Case Pemberton in 1880, at which time she lived with various relatives until her death in 1919. Edward Case Pemberton paid off his note in three years, and operated a successful dairy farm and mercantile store on Kaufman Road not far from his property. He was also known to take buttermilk into town where he sold it for five cents a gallon. Family members say he bought the land from Margaret Beeman Bryan specifically for the spring, which he used for his dairy operation. He added additional lands to his homestead, including 45 acres in the Cornelius Cox Survey, south of the Big Spring Survey along present Elam Road, 86 acres in the Amon McCommas Survey at McCommas Bluff, and ¼ acre on the Kaufman Road in the John Beeman Prairie Survey where he located his store (Billingsly 2006; Pemberton 2006; Toyer 2016).

In 1914, Pemberton was shot and killed in his store. The killer was never identified. Edward Case had seven sons: two (Claude and Fred) were by his second wife; and five (Hubert, Luther, Oliver, Otto, and Edward) were by his third wife. All seven sons eventually inherited some of Edward Case Pemberton's property, with his youngest son, Edward, inheriting the portion that includes the Big Spring Site. Bill Pemberton, a nephew of Edward, grew up near the area on the property that his father (Luther)

inherited. Bill Pemberton recalled that Edward's property had a frame house (constructed in the 1940s), windmill, a well (dug in 1934), and outbuildings associated with a small farm. He also noted that during the Great Depression era (late 1929 to 1930s), a circular livestock pen was erected on the property, but was subsequently taken down. The posts were removed and the holes filled in (Billingsly 2006; *Dallas Morning News* 1914; Pemberton 2006).

During the mid-1900s, gravel mining was undertaken by Edward's brother Oliver Pemberton, whose property adjoined Edward's on the south. Oliver later purchased a portion of Edward's land including the spring to expand his mining operation. When that began to impact the spring, a nephew, John Case Pemberton, who lived on the north part of the 160-acre tract inherited from his father Claude, offered to pay a sum comparable to potential earnings if the uncle would cease his mining operation, which he did. In the 1970s, when Bill Pemberton was taking care of the property, he tried to mitigate some of the impact from the gravel mining by allowing contractors working on a nearby road to deposit construction waste into the empty gravel pits. He then contoured the area (Pemberton 2006).

In the 1980s, the City of Dallas placed a sewer line and established a right-of-way (ROW), running north to south, west of the spring and along the western boundary of the Big Spring Site. The sewer line impacted an existing wetland. Oliver Pemberton's descendants sold their remaining parcels to Larry A. Koehler in 2003, who in 2004 agreed to a settlement from the City of Dallas in lieu of condemnation. Historically, this parcel of land has been in the hands of early Dallas settlers and their immediate descendants for over 160 years. Land use activities during the historic period include farming, dairying, and gravel mining (Pemberton 2006).

Summary of Land Use and Significance of the Big Spring Site

The Big Spring Site is important for understanding the connection between humans and the natural environment as it manifested in this part of Dallas County. The area that now makes up Dallas County contained numerous, and varied, sources of water, including springs—many of which have been lost to development. Today, Big Spring is one of the last intact springs in the county.

Big Spring has provided for human populations for at least 2,500 years, but before that it contributed to a diverse and complex ecosystem. Reaching as far back as 143,000 years ago, the area was characterized by approximately 100 Pleistocene species. Prehistorically, the area was an attractive location for a camp where stone tools were manufactured (41DL72). During the Protohistoric period (1600 to 1800) Caddoan speakers, Wichita, and others, were known to use the area as they established trails and routes, hunted, gathered, and manufactured tools (Dalbey 2013a, 2014, 2015b).

Throughout its historic period, the Big Spring Site represented a typical rural landscape that changed over time as humans occupying the site accessed different resources and redefined the land use. As north central Texas became home to European American settlers in the mid-1800s, the site shifted to reflect land use patterns of nineteenth century farmers. Although it is unclear as to how John Beeman used the Big Spring tract, when his daughter Margaret acquired the upper portion she and her

husband, John Neely Bryan, lived there in a log cabin and grew crops. John Neely Bryan was listed as a farmer in 1877 when he was committed to an insane asylum (Toyer 2015). When Edward Case Pemberton bought the property in 1880, the site shifted to a new purpose—dairy farming. Expanding on this venture, Pemberton developed a small commercial business, selling dairy products in town, and eventually selling from a store near his property. During the twentieth century Great Depression, the Big Spring Site offered its owner, Edward Pemberton (son of Edward Case Pemberton), the means to survival as a small farmstead with livestock. Finally, one of the more adverse impacts to the land occurred during the mid-1900s as the area was mined for gravel. The last several decades at Big Spring, however, have been a period of stewardship, where efforts are underway to mitigate some of the adverse impacts, and preserve the site’s natural and cultural features.

As a source of water, springs everywhere play an important role in both the development of the surrounding natural environment and human history. The water itself and the associated ecosystem are part of a complex relationship that sustains plant, animal, and human life. During the course of human travel, exploration, hunting, gathering, cultivation, manufacturing, and establishment of settlements, springs (as have other sources of water) provided humans with resources necessary to survive and thrive. At one time, portions of Texas were replete with springs. Sixteenth century European explorers noted that Native American trails often ran from one spring to another. When European Americans began settling in Texas in the 1800s, they often chose their site near a spring where the water was used to irrigate crops (Brune 2002).

The Big Spring Site presents a unique opportunity for understanding the delicate balance of ecosystems and the dynamics that occur over long periods of time. This complex, organic relationship touches upon varied, and overlapping, disciplines and fields within the natural (biological, physical, and earth) and social (anthropological and historical) sciences. The Big Spring Site offers a unique and rare opportunity to study the hydrology, botany, chemistry, and geologic impact the aquifer has on the local environment. Furthermore, the site promotes the holistic science of anthropology that examines the symbiotic relationship between the environment and humans. Prehistorically, the site provides information on early human activity in north central Texas, including but not limited to migration patterns, subsistence activities, trade, nutrition, and manufacturing. From a historical perspective, the Big Spring Site is significant as a vernacular rural landscape associated with the earliest settlers of Dallas County (the Beemans), the founder of Dallas (Bryan), late nineteenth and twentieth century families (the Pembertons), and perhaps, Sam Houston. It demonstrates the wide range of economic activities—agriculture, dairying, and gravel mining, as well as settlement patterns, recent historical events, and environmental stewardship. Ultimately, through this long history of natural and social development, the Big Spring Site promotes an appreciation for those before us and for the environment that sustained them.

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Informal interviews:

Lois Billingsly, descendant of Edward Case Pemberton, 2006

Bill Pemberton, descendant of Edward Case Pemberton, 2006

M C Toyer, descendant of Beeman Family, 2013c

15. Attachments

District or Site Map
descriptive material

Site Plan

Photos (historic & current)

Additional

Footnotes

Other figures from
cultural resources
management report
(Naumann et al. 2013).



Figure 2. Big Spring (figure adapted from 2013 report by Geo-Marine, Inc., see Naumann et al.).

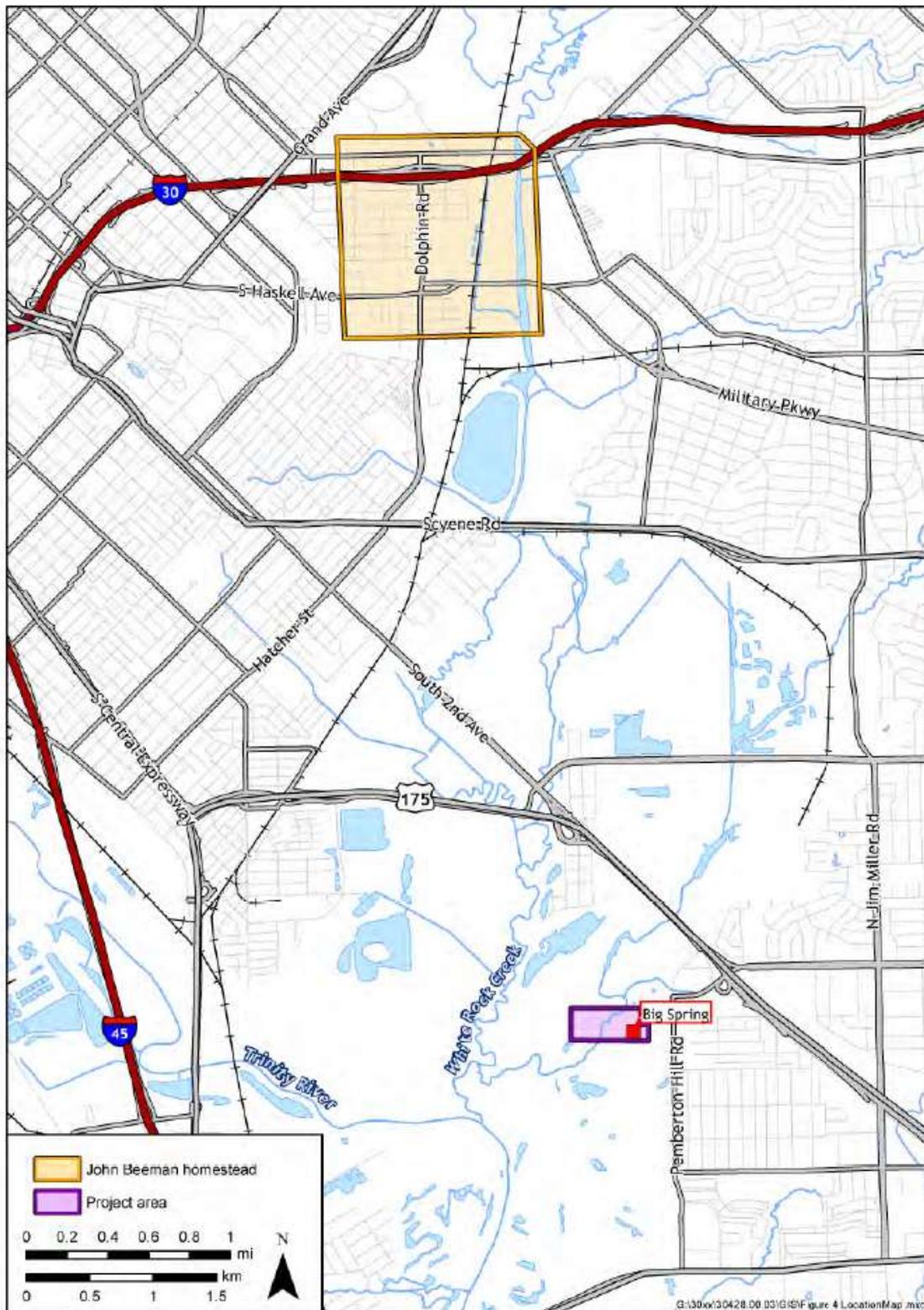


Figure 3. Location of John Beeman’s 640-acre homestead and the upper portion of his original Big Spring Tract (figure adapted from 2013 report by Geo-Marine, Inc., see Naumann et al.).



Figure 4. Walnut tree with railroad spike showing crest level of 1942 flood (figure adapted from 2013 report by Geo-Marine, Inc., see Naumann et al.).



Figure 5. Old pecan grove. This grove is a remnant of a once extensive bottomland hardwood forest (figure adapted from 2013 report by Geo-Marine, Inc., see Naumann et al.).



Figure 6. 1934 well head (figure adapted from 2013 report by Geo-Marine, Inc., see Naumann et al.).



Figure 7. Old pecan grove and outdoor recreational items near the location of Edward Case Pemberton's dairy operation and Great Depression-era outbuildings (figure adapted from 2013 report by Geo-Marine, Inc., see Naumann et al.).

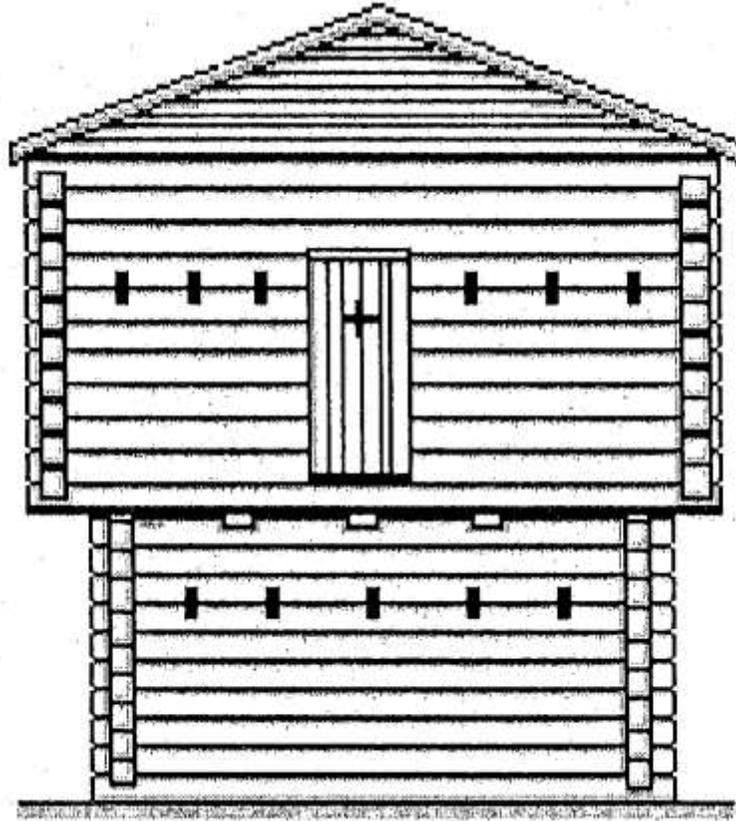


Figure 8. Sketch of typical block house (figure adapted from 2013 report by Geo-Marine, Inc., see Naumann et al.).



Figure 9. Location of John Beeman's Cedar Brake, Prairie, and Big Spring tracts (figure adapted from 2013 report by Geo-Marine, Inc., see Naumann et al.).

16. Designation Criteria

History, heritage and culture: Represents the historical development, ethnic heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or country.

Historic event: Location of or association with the site of a significant historic event.

Significant persons: Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state, or country.

Architecture: Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, landscape design, method of construction, exceptional craftsmanship, architectural innovation, or contains details which represent folk or ethnic art.

Architect or master builder: Represents the work of an architect, designer or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state or country.

Historic context: Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites, or areas which are eligible for preservation based on historic, cultural, or architectural characteristics.

Unique visual feature: Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city that is a source of pride or cultural significance.

Archeological: Archeological or paleontological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest.

National and state recognition: Eligible of or designated as a National Historic Landmark, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Archeological Landmark, American Civil Engineering Landmark, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic education: Represents as era of architectural, social, or economic history that allows an understanding of how the place or area was used by past generations.

Recommendation

The Designation Committee requests the Landmark Commission to deem this nominated landmark meritorious of designation as outlined in Chapter 51 and Chapter 51A, Dallas Development Code.

Further, the Designation Committee endorses the Preservation Criteria, policy recommendations and landmark boundary as presented by the Department of Development Services.

Date:

Daron Tapscott - Chair
Designation Committee

Marsha Prior
Historic Preservation Planner