

Fairhaven Retirement Home

Narrative - National Register of Historical Places

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Overview & Dates of Construction of the Fairhaven

The efforts to construct the Fairhaven Retirement Home began in November 1956 when a group of Denton residents began labors “to provide comfortable, secure living for Denton’s elderly... they wanted to provide it at such cost that those on pensions could afford it.”¹ Initial exertions began with a long series of fund raisers that included “cake sales, fairs, coffees, book reviews and direct appeals for money to purchase the land” and create an operating budget to begin construction. The Business and Professional Women’s Club led the fundraiser supported with other public-oriented organizations.

The land for the Fairhaven was acquired December 1, 1958. Joe Nichols and J. L. Ginnings provided a warranty deed for the site of the Fairhaven building in exchange for \$10 paid by Fairhaven Corporation, a Texas non-profit created by the original group of Denton residents. With the site secured, the Fairhaven Board engaged the Associates Architects firm in October 1959 to design the Fairhaven retirement home.²

The architects were O’Neil Ford, Arch B. Swank and Roland Laney, contracted as the firm “Ford, Swank and Laney, Associated Architects”. O’Neil Ford, a former Denton resident, designed the Little Chapel-in-the-Woods with Swank on the Texas Women’s University campus (1939), First Christian Church in Denton (1959), and the campus of Trinity University in San Antonio before accepting this Fairhaven project. Following Fairhaven, Ford designed the Selwyn School complex (1965, 1966), Denton Civic Center (1966), Denton City Hall (1967) and completed the Denton Library (1949, 1969). Swank was the architect of the Presbyterian Village in Dallas which was similar to the Fairhaven residential home. Laney was a Denton architect. The Fairhaven Board provided Associated Architects with the goals to design “a residence-type home where older person – probably 65 or older – can have recreation facilities and their own gardens. Handcrafts and other hobby rooms... Not to design a hospital or a nursing home, but a residence for older person who are still active and want a home-like atmosphere.”³

Construction began in March 1964 as the Fairhaven Corporation eventually gained a federal housing loan for construction. The Deed of Trust was financed by the Denton County National Bank, with the release of lien gained in 1965. By February 1965, Fairhaven began receiving guests, stating that the ‘Fairhaven is a domiciliary, not a convalescent home for elderly citizens’.

The architectural integrity of the Fairhaven is intact without significant changes or alterations. Fairhaven is significant as a Denton landmark which provided a ‘fair’ price for retired person as a ‘haven’ for Denton elder residents, created by the Denton populaces and designed by Ford.

¹ Denton Record Chronical, Denton, TX. 14 Feb 1965, Page 10.

² Denton Record Chronical, Denton, TX. 25 Oct 1959, Page 3.

³ Denton Record Chronical, Denton, TX. 25 Oct 1959, Page 3.

Historical Context for the Significance of Fairhaven

National Context

Prior to the Social Security Act of 1935, few retirement or long term care institutions existed outside of family attention for their elderly in the United States. The earliest examples for care for the aged date to the Middle Ages of England when almshouses were initiated by individual patrons or local group. Early designs followed the form of a guest house typically found at the gateways of monasteries.⁴ Endowments created by the founder(s) of a almshouse paid for the housing and care of the residents in addition to the cost of building the almshouse and supporting it with funds for maintenance. Benefactors typically specified that the almshouses were "to be inhabited by old and poor women of blameless conduct."⁵

English colonies in early American created the Poor House, known in England as Almshouses or Charity Houses, for elderly individuals without families to have a place to end their lives. The Poor House also housed the communities "insane", disabled, homeless, widowed, orphaned, intoxicated and others considered non-contributing, typically against their will. Reference to being placed in the "poorhouse" struck fear in people's minds into the late twentieth century. Until recently, the Monopoly Game included a card stating "Go to the Poorhouse! Lose a Turn!" Family quarrels ending with "driving us to the poorhouse" were used to strike fear and terror associated with the Poor House.

With the end of the Civil War, the number of Poor Houses grew. Famous examples of large city Poor Houses include: Tewksbury Almshouse near Lowell, Massachusetts; Bellevue Almshouse in New York City (now Bellevue Hospital); and Cook County Almshouse in Chicago (now Cook County Hospital). Society efforts to reform the Poor Houses saw the removal from the Poor Houses of: children; "fallen women" (prostitutes); mentally ill and the "feeble minded" (developmentally disabled). As these reforms gained momentum, those that remained were the elderly who had no choice but to stay. By the 1880s, the fear of the Poor House as being the place to die permeated American culture.⁶ In 1880, 33% of those in the Poor or Alms Houses were elderly individuals.⁷

Social analyst Harry C. Evans explained "The Poor House is a word of hate and loathing, for it includes the composite horrors of poverty, disgrace, loneliness, humiliation, abandonment, and

⁴ *Housing the aged in Western countries; programs, dwellings, homes, and geriatric facilities*. Glenn H Beyer; F H J Nierstrasz, Amsterdam, New York, Published for Bouwcentrum, Rotterdam, and the Center for Housing and Environmental Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., by Elsevier Pub. Co., 1967. Pages 13-14.

⁵ *Housing the aged in Western countries; programs, dwellings, homes, and geriatric facilities*. Glenn H Beyer; F H J Nierstrasz, Amsterdam, New York, Published for Bouwcentrum, Rotterdam, and the Center for Housing and Environmental Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., by Elsevier Pub. Co., 1967. Page 16.

⁶ Wagner, D. (2005). *The poorhouse: America's forgotten institution*. Lanham, MD: Rowman-Littlefield Publishers. Retrieved 7/17/2018 from <http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/issues/poor-relief-almshouse/>.

⁷ *Nursing Homes: History - Age, Aging, Social, Almshouse, and Care* - JRank Articles. Retrieved 7/17/2018 from <http://medicine.jrank.org/pages/1243/Nursing-Homes-History.html>.

degradation."⁸ Pension advocates such as Abraham Epstein recurrently maintained that Poor Houses clearly revealed the inability of elderly persons to sustain themselves. Epstein wrote in 1929, that the Poor Houses "stand as a threatening symbol of the deepest humiliation and degradation before all wage-earners after the prime of life."⁹

New references were used in the 1900s, Rest Home and later Nursing Home, replaced Poor House, yet soon carried the same connotations for the elderly's last refuge before death. In 1903, the Charity Board of New York City renamed their Almshouse to the "Home for the Aged and Infirm. The city of Charleston, South Carolina, changed their Almshouse name to the Charleston Home in 1913, with claim that elderly could find their needs met in their last days.¹⁰

With the beginning of the Great Depression, these Poor Houses now commonly referenced as Nursing Homes, increased to 67% elderly populations.¹¹ Before the 1930s a large percentage of the elderly population nationwide were fully dependent on their immediate families or charities for support, but the Great Depression upturned and unraveled many desperate families, and the amalgam of charitable organizations, benevolent societies, and state institutions could not keep up with the demand for assistance in caring for the elderly. New Deal programs such as Social Security were created to address these concerns, as expressed in a 1937 Social Security pamphlet:

Old people, like children, have lost much of their economic value to a household. Most American families no longer live in houses where one can build on a room or a wing to shelter aging parents and aunts and uncles and cousins. They no longer have gardens, sewing rooms, and big kitchens where old people can help make the family's living. Old people were not dependent upon their relatives when there was need in a household for work they could do. They have become dependent since their room and their board cost money, while they have little to give in return. Now they need money of their own to keep the dignity and independence they had when their share in work was the equivalent in money.¹²

By the 1930s, federal government officials noted that the rising proportion of the elderly in such "homes" was a sign that older people could no longer compete in the modern world. According to a government study in the 1930s, "the predominance of the aged in the almshouse is a sign of their increasing dependency."¹³ Assuming that all elderly individuals would eventually need

⁸ Nursing Homes: History - Age, Aging, Social, Almshouse, and Care - JRank Articles. Retrieved 7/17/2018 from <http://medicine.jrank.org/pages/1243/Nursing-Homes-History.html>.

⁹ EPSTEIN, A. The Challenge of the Aged. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929, page 128.

¹⁰ Nursing Homes: History - Age, Aging, Social, Almshouse, and Care - JRank Articles. Retrieved 7/17/2018 from <http://medicine.jrank.org/pages/1243/Nursing-Homes-History.html>.

¹¹ FATE (Foundations Aiding the Elderly), "The History of Nursing Homes". Retrieved 7/17/2018 from www.4fate.org/links.php.

¹² "Why Social Security?" 1937 pamphlet published by the Social Security Administration. <https://www.ssa.gov/history/whybook.html>

¹³ United States Social Security Board, 1932.

support, the US Social Security Board argued that small pensions were a less expensive solution. In the movement to establish the Social Security program, Poor Houses were planned to close.¹⁴

In asserting the constitutionality of the Social Security Act (1935), Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo, writing for the majority, proclaimed that "the hope behind this statute is to save men and women from the rigors of the poorhouse as well as the haunting fear that such a lot awaits them when the journey's end is near."¹⁵ The assumption was that monthly Social Security checks could sustain individuals to live independently.

The 1935 Social Security Act supplied reliable income to the aged population through its Old Age Insurance program, funded by payments from workers into a fund that they could draw upon later in life, as well as the Old Age Assistance program, which provided cash payments for the elderly regardless of their work record. A 1939 amendment to the act expanded the program to help survivors and dependents. These changes to the welfare system coincided with national interest in replacing the vast poorhouse system with a variety of alternatives to institutionalized housing for the elderly, including incentives that allowed older persons to enjoy some autonomy in their own homes. After World War II, the Veterans Administration introduced benefits for disabled veterans and surviving spouses, thus increasing income for some retirees (many from the World War I generation) that could be spent on housing. Veterans benefits, old-age assistance, Social Security, and unemployment assistance could be spent on nursing home care, an influx of money that not only stimulated growth of the nursing home industry, but also encouraged new alternatives for housing the elderly.

With the enactment of Social Security, remaining Poor Houses and the equitant Homes were transferred into private control, without change to the elderly nor supervisors. The elderly were classified as recipients of private care, and the institution was able to receive their residents' monthly annuities. Congress amended Social Security with the Medical Facilities Survey and Construction Act of 1954, allowing for the development of public institutions for older adults. For the first time, both public and private nursing home residents were granted federal support for their assistance.¹⁶ With only a change in names, nursing homes still lacked the medical care, food, and attendants needed to care for the elderly and the labels of "warehouses" for the old and "junkyards" for the dying replaced the old references to Poor Houses. The public fear of ending their days in these nursing homes and their relatives guilty for abandoning their elders to nursing homes remained strong as reference to the Poor House.¹⁷

The post WWII building boom throughout the country resulted in new construction that replaced older and sometimes outmoded buildings, which then became available at bargain prices. Many of these buildings, including older hotels, were converted to nursing homes. The federal

¹⁴ FATE (Foundations Aiding the Elderly), "The History of Nursing Homes". Retrieved 7/17/2018 from www.4fate.org/links.php.

¹⁵ HABER, C., and GRATTON, B. *Old Age and the Search for Security*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

¹⁶ FATE (Foundations Aiding the Elderly), "The History of Nursing Homes". Retrieved 7/17/2018 from www.4fate.org/links.php.

¹⁷ *Nursing Homes: History - Age, Aging, Social, Almshouse, and Care* - JRank Articles. Retrieved 7/17/2018 from <http://medicine.jrank.org/pages/1243/Nursing-Homes-History.html>.

government, in recognition of federal funds now flowing into the expanding market for elderly housing, undertook a survey of such facilities in 1954. At the time, the definition of different residence types (including nursing care homes, personal care with nursing homes, personal care homes, and domiciliary homes) were somewhat fluid, but the first estimate indicated that approximately 270,000 people were living in 9,000 homes classified as “nursing care home” or “personal care home with nursing,” the vast majority of which (86%) were private.¹⁸ By 1956, Social Security expanded further to provide benefits to domestic workers, farm workers, non-professional self-employed persons, federal civilian employees not in the federal retirement system, railroad workers with less than 10 years of service were added, homeworkers members of the military and all self-employed persons except doctors.¹⁹

Texas Context

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics published Bulletin #667 in 1941 focused on Homes for the Aged in the United States. The report documents the gradual vanishing of general almshouses where the only commonality was that all inmates (residents) were financially destitute. The Federal Social Security Act created financial allowances for States to assist the aged. Able-bodied individuals found fiscal support to leave almshouses and a number of the almshouses closed or were converted to infirmaries or to institutions to care for ailing aged, as reported in the Monthly Labor Review, September 1938 and January 1939. New “old people’s homes” expanded and in 1939 the Bureau of Labor Statistics surveyed 1,428 like homes across the United States identified as homes which did not carry any social stigma and which enjoyed public acceptance. The summary of the report begins in reflection of the attitude of the time:

‘Various means have been resorted to, in the United State as elsewhere, for caring for old people who are without homes or relatives to support them and those who, possessing means, lack the strength or desire to run an establishment of their own. The almshouse has been a traditional way for caring for destitute (or “paupers” as the phrase formerly was) of all ages. Supported as a public charity, the almshouse or poor farm has always been regarded by self-respecting individuals as a last desperate resort, not to be considered except in extremity, for residence in such an institution generally carried with it a painful social stigma.’²⁰

Homes for the Aged or “old people’s homes” required the applicants to meet requirements defined by the sponsoring agency. Once membership was awarded, the person was a ‘member for life’ at the home which entitled them to meals, a bedroom, clothing, laundry, medical and nursing care and burial. Most homes enjoyed a subsidizing organization. Many of the homes required residents to participate in tasks as they were able but there was a wide variation of homes and expectations.

¹⁸ “Senior Living History: 1950 – 1959,” <https://www.seniorliving.org/history/1950-1959/>.

¹⁹ “Senior Living History: 1950 – 1959,” <https://www.seniorliving.org/history/1950-1959/>.

²⁰ Homes for the Aged in the United States, Directory and Entry Requirements. Bulletin #677, 1941. United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Page 1. Referral by Alyssa Gerszewski, Texas Historical Commission, Historian, Federal Programs.

The survey of homes found that 30% were established between 1875 to 1900 and another 52% created between 1900 and 1929. Of the homes in the survey, 34% had fewer than 25 residents while 27% had between 25 to 50 residents. Of the 1,428 total number of homes identified in the United States, 1,248 of the homes responded to the survey, of which 25 were reported in Texas with 24 homes responding. The national survey found that 41% or 514 were supported by religious denominations, while 36% or 451 homes were sponsored by private organization, and 12% or 150 homes were sponsored by fraternal or national groups.²¹ War service by those who were involved in the Civil War or any war accounted for 40 homes with the largest number of residents and capacity. The average age for acceptance was 65 years of age.

The 1939 publication included a directory of homes, by state, and records 24 specific homes in Texas, 8 located in North Texas but none with venue in Denton County²²:

- Arlington
 - Eastern Star Home – Texas Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star:
 - Whites only; 5 years Texas residence; Transfer property to home on admission
 - Home for Aged Masons – Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas Masons
 - Whites only; Texas member; Transfer property of home on admission; Able-bodied
- Dallas
 - Fowler Homes – Disciples of Christ in America
 - White Texas Church members only; 70 years old; \$100 admission fee; Transfer property of home on admission; Able-bodied
 - C.C. Young Memorial Home – North Texas Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South
 - White Church members only; 70 years old; \$365 admission fee; 2 year Texas membership; Transfer property of home on admission; Able-bodied; Burial fee or guaranty of expense by relatives or friends required
- Ennis:
 - I.O.O.F. Old Folk’s Home – Grand Order of Texas, Independent Order of Odd Fellows
 - White IOOF members only; 65 years old; 10 year Texas member; Transfer property of home on admission; Able-bodied

²¹ Homes for the Aged in the United States, Directory and Entry Requirements. Bulletin #677, 1941. United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Page 7.

²² Homes for the Aged in the United States, Directory and Entry Requirements. Bulletin #677, 1941. United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Pages 114-115.

- Fort Worth:
 - Cumberland Rest Home – First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth
 - White Woman Church members only; 65 years old; 1 year Texas member; Transfer property of home on admission; Able-bodied; Without relatives able to support; \$10 monthly expenses
- Sherman:
 - Woodman Circle Home for Aged and Orphans – Supreme Forest, Woodman
 - White Members only; 65 years old; \$500 admission fee; Widows of member accepted; Transfer property of home on admission; Able-bodied
- Weatherford:
 - Pythian Home – Texas Grand Lodge, Knight of Pythias
 - White widows of members only; 1 year Texas member; Able-bodied

Denton County Context

There were no Poor Houses in Texas, instead there only existed County Poor Farms. The agricultural economy of Texas shifted the care for the aged and poor to focus to Farms. Poor Farms were the standard of care in Texas Counties from about 1870 until the Social Security Act with extensions in select Texas County until the 1960.²³

Care for the elderly and needy in early Texas and the Republic of Texas was fixed in the Spanish traditions which anticipated the families of those in need would care for them supported by the church and civil authorities. As Texas became part of the United States, these expectations began to shift to reflect what was observed in other states where county officials administered local financial needs as state institutions oversaw the needs of those with physical needs.²⁴ By 1870, the system of Poor Farms was rooted in about 40 rural counties.²⁵

The Denton County Poor Farm was created in 1883 when the Denton County Commissioners Court bought approximately 375 acres from Jonathan and Amanda Woods for \$11.13 an acre.²⁶ The following year, the Commissioners Court defined the Poor Farm as a place to provide for paupers, supervised by a superintendent to be required to provide all of his time and attention to the management of the farm and the care for the paupers. Further defined in December 1884, the superintendent was to provide a bond to insure the faithful execution of his duties.²⁷ In January 1885, the Commissioner's Court accepted Captain J. A. Kinnin as the first superintendent and Kinnin provided a bond for \$1,000.00 in exchange for a salary of \$55.00 per month.²⁸ The first

²³ Freeman, Martha Doty (2008) "Indigent Care in Texas: A Study of Poor Farms and Outdoor Relief," Index of Texas Archaeology: Open Access Gray Literature from the Lone Star State: Vol. 2008 , Article 20. <https://doi.org/10.21112/ita.2008.1.20>

²⁴ Freeman, Martha Doty (2008) "Indigent Care in Texas: A Study of Poor Farms and Outdoor Relief," Index of Texas Archaeology: Open Access Gray Literature from the Lone Star State: Vol. 2008 , Article 20. <https://doi.org/10.21112/ita.2008.1.20>

²⁵ Debbie Cantrell, "The County Poor Farm System in Texas", The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume 93, July 1989 - April, 1990 Page: 169.

²⁶ Denton County Recorded Document #77000877.

²⁷ James D. Laney, "A History of the Denton County Poor Farm, Denton County, Texas 1883 – 1948", April 19, 1982.

²⁸ James D. Laney, "A History of the Denton County Poor Farm, Denton County, Texas 1883 – 1948", April 19, 1982, page 7.

inmates, reference to residents who lived and working the land, were located at the for profit Poor Farm to raise crops. The 1888 Census for the Denton County's Poor Farm reported four person as inmates, one who was 'Colored', which were paid \$8.33 per month per person.²⁹ Payments typically came from the profits of the Poor Farm. Capt. J. A. Kinnin was the first superintendent of the Denton County Poor Farm³⁰ who left this position to serve in the same capacity at the Dallas County Poor Farm.

William Roland Laney became the second superintendent of the Poor Farm in August 1892.³¹ In the terms of the contract, Laney was provided all the land, farming tools, implement, cows and mules. Laney was required to acquire all necessary substantial food not raised on the farm to feed the inmates and his own family. The Commissioner's Court instructed Laney to run the County Poor Farm as a prudent farmer and to care for the paupers in a kind and humane manner. As part of his contract for \$40.00 a month, Laney was to provide a horse for used by the Farm and to market anything on the farm that he could, with proceed to be delivered to the County Treasurer. An additional duty was to rent 25 acres of the County's Farm and collect these rents.³²

Laney made the Poor Farm work and in 1895, the County paid \$367.30 for a well bored on the farm. The Farm continued to create a profit and in 1897 the County purchase 6 pigs for \$50.00 and a bull for \$20.00.³³ The inmates or residents at the Poor Farm included those who were mentally and physically handicapped, elderly and those incapable of making a living. Laney's wife provided some meals for the paupers and sewed for them. The Laney's lived in the larger main house provide for the superintendent's family and the residents live in four small one or two room houses which they were expected to clean and wash. Orphan children were sent to the state facility in Corsicana, Texas. Laney remained superintendent until 1908.³⁴ G. W. Pugh followed Laney, until his death on the Poor Farm in 1909³⁵. W. P. Brown followed Pugh.

The Poor Farm was located on the north side of Mingo Road, settled near Cooper Creek, between Laney Road and Collins Road, the old site of the Mingo post office. Laney Road was named after the longtime superintendent, William Roland Laney, who managed the Poor Farm from the 1890s to the 1900s. This is an important reference for William Roland Laney, Sr.³⁶ was the grandfather of Roland Laney, the local architect for the Fairhaven project.

The Commissioners Court appointed Standlee D. Roberts as trustee to sale the land in 1948.³⁷ There was once a cemetery in the southwest corner at Mingo and Laney Roads, but it was

²⁹ L.L. Foster, Commissioner, copyright 2001 Texas State Historical Association, originally published Austin, Tx State Printing Office, 1889 , http://www.poorhousestory.com/TX_ForgottenCensus_Table.htm

³⁰ Denton County News (Denton, Texas), 9 Feb 1893.

³¹ James D. Laney, "A History of the Denton County Poor Farm, Denton County, Texas 1883 – 1948", April 19, 1982, page 9.

³² Denton County Commissioner's Court Minutes, Vol. C, 11, August 1892, pages 95 – 96.

³³ James D. Laney, "A History of the Denton County Poor Farm, Denton County, Texas 1883 – 1948", April 19, 1982, page 11.

³⁴ James D. Laney, "A History of the Denton County Poor Farm, Denton County, Texas 1883 – 1948", April 19, 1982, page 13.

³⁵ The Post-Signal (Pilot Point, Texas), Vol 31, No 36, Ed 1 Friday, April 23, 1909.

³⁶ William Laney, Cooper Creek Cemetery, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/23300997/sarah-jane-laney>

³⁷ Denton County, 1948 Recorded Documents #4144, #4175, #4177.

bulldozed after the sale of the land. D. J. Taylor, local historian and former member of the Denton County Historical Commission, reports from his discoveries in Find-a-Grave and various newspaper reports at least fifteen documented burials but there are probably many more.³⁸

W. Roland Laney, III was born in 1918 and was the local architect for the Fairhaven. It is anecdotal that Roland Laney followed his grandfather in the care for the elderly in Denton and the concern for elders in Denton County had come full circle.

Denton City Elder Care prior to the Fairhaven

The Fairhaven was built after ten years of planning and fundraising. Prior to the opening of the Fairhaven there were four licensed custodial homes capable of supporting 70 people without need of medical care and two operational nursing homes capable of housing 88 persons for long term medical care averaging about 150 days.³⁹

The first medical care hospital in was the Denton Hospital and Clinic opened in 1926 on South Locust Street. This private hospital supplied 30 beds, an operating room and delivery room. It closed in 1955 with the opening of Flow Memorial Hospital in in 1950. Flow Hospital was three stories built on a cow pasture owned by Mr. Scripture between Bryan and Ponder Streets.

Denton Manor opened first in 1960, equipped for 38 patients, while the Beaumont opened in 1963 licensed to serve 50 persons. Both were oriented for medical care of the elderly. The Beaumont when opened cost \$378.50 for a private room per month. Ward rooms, with four persons per room cost between \$225 to \$275 per patient per month.⁴⁰

Custodial homes were converted residential homes for groups or wards shared by elderly persons. The Rollins Home for the Aged and two others Homes for the Aged were located Pilot Point, one was located in Denton. Interior photographs showed military barracks style beds separated by bed stands in one room shared by a group of four women or men.⁴¹ Custodial homes were not licensed, nor could provide care for those restricted to their beds, which was the role of a nursing home. The comparison is a boarding house to a long term care hospital.

The Home for the Aged in Pilot Point had a 21 patient capacity and was the first to open in 1935. The charge was \$83 per month to cover the operations by Mrs. Opal Talley and two employees. The Rollins Home for the Aged accommodated 8 residents in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rollins as a cost of between \$83 to \$100 per month. The Nichols Home for the Aged was the third private home located in Pilot Point, providing housing for 14 residents supported by four employees. Meals are served family style with basic self-help services such as laundry.⁴² The Voorhees Home, once at 1013 W. Sycamore in Denton, was the home of Mrs. Etta Voorhees. Opened in 1958, three employees help her care for ten residents. The average cost was \$125 per month per person.

³⁸ D. J. Taylor, Interview, August 8, 2018.

³⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 29 Sep 1963, Sun, Page 1.

⁴⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 29 Sep 1963, Sun, Page 2.

⁴¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 30 Sep 1963, Mon, Page 1.

⁴² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 30 Sep 1963, Mon, Page 2.

Typical experiences were meal, watching television and Sunday morning services at each home. The reporter for the newspaper reflected that most residents simply sat and waited for death. The need they fulfilled was a location for elderly persons who became ill or physically unable to care for themselves to live for about \$85 a month. The Denton State Welfare Department supervisor is quoted as “at times when we had nothing to fall back on, when we had no place to send people, no money – the custodial home operators did meet a need. They did the best they could. And they still meet a need.”⁴³

Significance of the Fairhaven to Denton residents

The aspiration for “Fair” treatment of Denton’s elderly in a residential “haven” began in 1956. This vision by a group of Denton residents formed the following year. A Texas non-profit corporation was formed, plans formed and announcements were publicized on Friday, June 14, 1957.⁴⁴ Leadership was organized by Myrtle Richardson, president of the Denton Business and Professional Woman’s Club for the community project named Fairhaven. Mrs. Richardson’s objective began with her efforts to find a home for her aging mother. Unable to find a place where her mother could live a life of comfort, safety and happiness, Mrs. Richardson decided to establish such a place, setting her dream into reality as Fairhaven.⁴⁵

The directors and trustees for the Fairhaven met at the First Christian Church in Denton, located on Fulton Drive and designed by O’Neil Ford. The pastor, Rev. James Reed began discussions, presenting the need for residential housing for the mature and aging in Denton. The organizational structure of Fairhaven, Inc. was composed of these committees:

- Location: Fred Rayzor (creator of Selwyn School); Bessie Shook; Oran Monroe; Mrs. Tom Richardson; Mrs. J. V. Slack and Blanche Burright
- Building: Jack Bond; J. E. Savage; Mrs. Annie Hughey; W. C. Orr; W. F. Brooks, Sr.; Mrs. Bettie Priddy; Rev. James Reed and Frank Hall
- Budget and Finance: Oran Monroe; Jack Bonds; W. F. Brooks Sr.; Mrs. Ruth Ewan; Mrs. Hazel Frederick; Mrs. John Morris and Mrs. L. A. Sharp
- Rules and Regulations: Bruce Davis; Fred Minor; Mrs. Lola Mann; Mrs. Ira Judd; Mrs. Etta Johnson; Ruth Anderson and Mrs. John Underwood
- Medical and Health: Dr. Waller Millers; Dr. W. A. Remley; Mrs. W. W. Marshall; Mrs. George Hinkle; Mrs. Bennie Holley; Dr. M. L. Hutcheson and Joanna Wells
- Promotion/Publicity/Solicitation of Funds: J. P. Harrison; W. F. Brooks Sr.; Mrs. C. W. Tinney; Mrs. Mae Hollers; Mrs. Virginia Kirkland; Riley Cross; Mrs. Gretna Cobb Davis; Ben Ivey; Jack Bonds; E. A. Nall, Buford Harrell and Mrs. L. A. Sharp

The first of multiple fund raisers began with a cake sale at the Ball Furniture Store the following month, July 27, 1957.⁴⁶

⁴³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 30 Sep 1963, Mon, Page 2.

⁴⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 16 Jun 1957, Sun, Page 11.

⁴⁵ Greater Dallas Christian Life Magazine, Mrs. Myrtle Richardson, 1996.

⁴⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 25 Jul 1957, Thu, Page 2.

The location for the Fairhaven was center focus in August 1957. Mrs. Myrtle Richardson hosted a discussion of the Business and Professional Women's Club.⁴⁷ Consideration was made for proximity to a church and places for shopping and entertainment. Reports were made on visits to other retirement homes with feedback gained from these residents.

Mrs. Richardson was President of Fairhaven, and a charter member of the Denton Soroptimist Club and past chair of the Crippled Children's camp, raising funds for a Denton cabin at the Bartonville camp location.⁴⁸ Myrtle Richardson owned a women's clothing store, The Vanity Fair Store near TWU, supporting the Women's Club with six style shows a year.⁴⁹ She traveled to New York City four times a year to visit the fashion centers to acquire new designs, specializing in formal wedding gowns and assisting in bridal planning efforts.

The last week of September, 1957 was the observance of National Business Women's Week. Begun in 1928 by the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the Denton activities began at First Christian Church, supported by San Rayburn, speaker of the House of Representatives.⁵⁰ An ask for support for Fairhaven by the Denton Business and Professional Woman's Club appeared in the Sunday's "Letter to the Editor."⁵¹

Dear Sir:

We are sure that you are already aware of the plight of many elderly citizens in Denton County. Aged and alone, they feel a helplessness that causes unhappiness and distress. Many of them are not able to adequately care for themselves. Feeling it our duty as citizens, and from a humanitarian standpoint, in November of 1956, the Denton Business and Professional Woman's Club voted to establish a homes for elderly persons, to be located in the Denton area. To this end, a non-profit, benevolent, corporation was organized called Fairhaven.

It is estimated that about \$100,000 will be needed to erect the necessary building and facilities for this home. We are confident that you, along with many other public spirited citizens, will wish to have a part in this undertaking. We believe than many, many people in this area will join together to make it a reality by their contributions, which we trust will be as generous as possible. All contributions to Fairhaven are deductible as income tax items. We would very much appreciate your contributions. Your check should be mailed to Fairhaven, car of Mrs. Etta Johnson, Treasure, 2110 N. Locust, Denton.

For further information, we would welcome your call to any of the undersigned. Thanking you in advance for your contribution an support, we are:

Mrs. Myrtle Richardson, President

Miss. Bessie Shook, Vice-President

Mrs. Bettie Priddy, Secretary

Mrs. Etta Johnson, Treasurer

⁴⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 23 Aug 1957, Fri, Page 5.

⁴⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 15 Sep 1957, Sun, Page 13.

⁴⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 15 Sep 1957, Sun, Page 13.

⁵⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 22 Sep 1957, Sun, Page 12.

⁵¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 22 Sep 1957, Sun, Page 4.

Fundraising Begins

The Women's Club hosted a fair on the courthouse lawn on October 12, 1957.⁵² Mrs. Virginia Kirkland organized the event which include baked good and homemade items sold to raise funds for Fairhaven. The event began with a dinner at the Southern Hotel hosting Denton's Texas House Representative Alonzo Jamison for his appreciated work to support married women's equal property rights. Jamison commended the Club for organizing the Denton Community to support Fairhaven, recognizing their efforts in "Helping provide a better life for those growing old is a project worthy of everyone's attention." The *Fairhaven Fair* collected over \$200 from the sale of cakes, coffee, candy and handiwork. During the Fair, the Club announced the sale of individual bricks to be used in constructing the Fairhaven as a fund raiser. The bricks could be purchased from members of the Club or at the Vanity Fair Store.⁵³

Following the Fairhaven Fair on the county courthouse lawn, additional organizations provided their support. The Grandmother's Club of Denton announced their support and work for Fairhaven to raise funds toward building the Fairhaven.⁵⁴ Denton County National Bank publicized their support in fund raising for the Fairhaven, providing a building owned by the Bank near the downtown Square as the location for the future Fairhaven Store.⁵⁵ The project store, operated by the Denton Business and Professional Women's Club, accepted house based items donated by Denton residents for resale with funds received provided to support the building of Fairhaven. Mrs. Richardson coordinated the pick up of items and encouraged Denton residents to contribute everything from bassinets, scooters and even kitchen sinks for the benefit of resell to raise funds supporting Fairhaven.

The Project Store benefiting Fairhaven was operational by December 1, 1957.⁵⁶ Initial donation included a 1918 fur lined cap, a fancy black cocktail apron, Reader's Digest issues. The Denton Record-Chronical reported the support for the Project Store with "merchants and citizens have searched attics and store rooms for items no longer needed. The store is the third special project of the club for Fairhaven. The first project was Fairhaven Fair on the courthouse lawn in October. For the past month members have busily been selling bricks for the home."⁵⁷

The official name of the store became the *Opportunity Store* during the December meeting of the Business and Professional Woman's Club meeting. Members of the Fairhaven board joined the Club's meeting to emphasize how the Fairhaven is not to be a nursing home.⁵⁸ Federal aid requirements discussions began on how the Federal Housing loan could provide assistance for a home such as Fairhaven. The Club members also received a profit report that sales of brick raised \$225 for the Fairhaven project.

⁵² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 03 Oct 1957, Thu, Page 15.

⁵³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 15 Oct 1957, Tue, Page 5.

⁵⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 27 Oct 1957, Sun, Page 58.

⁵⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 07 Nov 1957, Thu, Page 15.

⁵⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 01 Dec 1957, Sun, Page 15.

⁵⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 01 Dec 1957, Sun, Page 15.

⁵⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 05 Dec 1957, Thu, Page 16.

The Opportunity Store supporting Fairhaven project funding had “a little bit of everything” by February 1958 including second-hand furniture, books, records and household goods .⁵⁹ Located at 108 W. Pecan, the Opportunity Store became a hub for the Business and Professional Women’s Club, as the location to turn in personal reservations to attend the dinner with guest speaker Judge Sarah T. Hughes, Texas District Court since 1935.⁶⁰

During March 1958, the Denton Business and Professional Woman’s Club began efforts to include other groups in Denton County. Bessie Shook, former English faculty at North Texas State Normal (UNT), spoke at the Justin Woman’s Club to present the proposed home for the aged to be established in Denton.⁶¹ A Letter to the Editor told the story of a little boy named David who wanted to help build a modern home for the older folks of Denton County and how he would bring family and friends to the Opportunity Store to buy things to help Fairhaven.⁶² This story about David created a follow up Letter to the Editor to thank the people of Denton County for their generous donations and gifts to the Opportunity Store as a wide increase of items arrived after the story.⁶³ The Denton Beauty Culturist presented a \$50 check to Mrs. Etta Johnson to support Fairhaven fundraising.⁶⁴

Stories also appeared in the Denton Record-Chronical newspaper about various Fairhaven Board members. Rev. James Reed was highlighted as a Board member while very busy in supervising the building of the new “contemporary” First Christian Church to be located on Fulton Drive, designed by O’Neil Ford.⁶⁵ Bessie Shook, one of many Club members associated with the North Texas State College (present day UNT), is identified as an active Fairhaven board member.⁶⁶

Promotion of the Opportunity Store continued as Christmas arrived to encourage those in Denton County to clean out their children’s toy boxes and provide these items to support Fairhaven.⁶⁷ As the Store continued to receive clothing, a local dry cleaner provided free cleaning for the Store to resale these items. Local businesses repaired bikes for resale at the Store. A local music store donated their stock of outdated recording for other to enjoy at discounted prices from the Store. To complement the proceeds from the Store, the third annual fundraising fair was held the first week of December at the downtown Square.⁶⁸

The Fairhaven property, three and one-third acres, was purchased by the Fairhaven Board in late November 1958. This transaction created the lot for the future Fairhaven home, located on the east side of the proposed extension of Bell Avenue near the future Peach Street.⁶⁹ J. L. Ginnings and Joe Nichols sold the land, part of the Joseph Carter survey, to the Fairhaven Board, assisted

⁵⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 05 Feb 1958, Wed, Page 10.

⁶⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 13 Feb 1958, Thu, Page 14.

⁶¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 11 Mar 1958, Tue, Page 5.

⁶² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 25 May 1958, Sun, Page 4.

⁶³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 28 Jul 1958, Mon, Page 4.

⁶⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 17 Aug 1958, Sun, Page 13.

⁶⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 18 Sep 1958, Thu, Page 7.

⁶⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 12 Oct 1958, Sun, Page 14.

⁶⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 04 Nov 1958, Tue, Page 5.

⁶⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 30 Nov 1958, Sun, Page 50.

⁶⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 30 Nov 1958, Sun, Page 50.

by the Fairhaven's attorney, Bruce Davis.⁷⁰ After two years of consideration of a number of possible locations, the Locations Committee selected this site for its mature trees, slope of the lot to support landscaping and the overlook to Sherman Drive. At a New Year's Eve party hosted by Mrs. Richardson, president of the Fairhaven Board, the group of 12 members resolved to set March 1959 as the starting date of work on the Fairhaven.⁷¹ On March 5, 1959, the Fairhaven Board met with Will Phillips of Page, Southerland and Page Architects.⁷² No reports exist on the outcome of this meeting.

The Fairhaven Board returned to fundraising during later March 1959, planning a series of coffee events to raise \$2,000 owed associated with the purchase of the lot for the Fairhaven home.⁷³ Agreed was that board members would call seven local residents to ask for their participation in the coffees to be held in each member's home. Each invited person was asked to contribute 50 cents for the Fairhaven project, then host a coffee in their homes, inviting a new group of six persons to coffee and asking for the same replication in return. Collectively, the planned coffees were to raise the needed \$2,000 to pay the loan in full. The Denton Ariel Club report by Mrs. Edward Lane noted that their club raised \$62.50 from their coffees during April.⁷⁴

The Fairhaven Board creatively introduced additional fundraisers. Evelyn Oppenheimer, well known book reviewer in Texas and for Neiman-Marcus while consultant to Republic National Bank in Dallas, provided a review of "The King Ranch".⁷⁵ Tickets to the April review held at TWU were sold by members of the Business and Professional Women's Club by Mrs. Richardson at the Vanity Shop, Elizabeth Hendley at Hendley's Dress & Gift Shop, and female faculty at North Texas State College (UNT) and TWU. Support within Denton County continued to be established for Fairhaven as a worthy project.

The Denton Record-Chronicle provided continued approval of Fairhaven in their editorial following the book review. Noted was that as Denton County continued to grow that the need of school aged children had been addressed but "nothing has been done for the elderly residents. Elderly citizen need a home and Fairhaven will fill this need."⁷⁶ The Editorial provided details that Fairhaven is inclusive of any elderly person, open to those of all religious faiths. Once admitted, residence continues until hospital care is necessary. The call for support focused on "Fairhaven is a community project – a project for a group of citizens that the board feels have been completely overlooked. Denton needs its elderly citizens. They want to stay in Denton. Fairhaven, a home for these citizens, will make this possible". Following this call, the Justin Business and Professional Woman's Club announced that their sale of bricks and hosting of coffees has almost reached their goal of raising \$100 for Fairhaven.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 14 Dec 1958, Sun, Page 9.

⁷¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 04 Jan 1959, Sun, Page 3.

⁷² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 04 Mar 1959, Wed, Page 2.

⁷³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 22 Mar 1959, Sun, Page 14.

⁷⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 16 Apr 1959, Thu, Page 16.

⁷⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 23 Apr 1959, Thu, Page 18.

⁷⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 26 Apr 1959, Sun, Page 4.

⁷⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 11 May 1959, Mon, Page 11.

In response to the Editorial that Fairhaven residents could remain until illness caused their departure, the Business and Professional Women's Club announced Fairhaven plans now includes an infirmary facility. The Fairhaven Board also announced on May 18, 1959, that donations, fairs, cake sales, coffees, the book review and sales from the Opportunity Store had raise \$10,068.08.⁷⁸ From these funds the Board made a second payment of \$8,500 toward the \$10,000 original price for the three and one-third acre land purchase for the Fairhaven lot, leaving a final payment of \$500 to complete the purchase. The editorial complemented Mrs. Richardson and the Club for their "worthwhile endeavor," noting that "whittling away \$9,500 of a \$10,000 debt in a relatively short time is just another example of what often happens when a group of women make up their mind about something."⁷⁹ The following week, the Center Point Home Demonstration Club announced their plans to support Fairhaven with a bake sale.⁸⁰

Building site secured

The final payment on the \$10,000 Fairhaven note was made by Christine Canafax, Fairhaven treasurer, to banker R. M Barns.⁸¹ The Fairhaven building site became free and clear before the end of July 1957.

With the Fairhaven land secured, the Business and Professional Women's Club turned attention to raising funds for the building of Fairhaven. A memorial fund was established as the Fairhaven Memorial Trust Fund by the Fairhaven Board. Initial memorials recognized Oran Monroe by the nurses of Flow Memorial Hospital and others accompanied by the memory of Ben Caraway, O. M. King, Mrs. Frank Peck, W. C. Collier and Henry Owsley.⁸² The Editorial from September 21 reinforced the need for Fairhaven, calling for the "need to start now to prepare for the care of the aged folk already in our community... the next step is to raise funds to build the first unit... Perhaps one of Denton's proudest moments will come when she can point to beautiful Fairhaven. Yes, Denton needs Fairhaven."⁸³ Beginning in September, the City of Denton announced public hearings concerning the creation of roads north of Sherman Drive to include the extension of Bell Avenue to be created along the site of the Fairhaven lot.⁸⁴

The Fairhaven memorial funds continued to grow. The first memorial was for Oran Monroe, an original supporter of Fairhaven. This inspired additional memorials for Ben Caraway, O. M. King, Mrs. Frank Peck, Mrs. W. C. Collier, Henry Owsley, Mrs. J. M Brooks, Mrs. C. H. Davie and Dr. J. H. Allen.⁸⁵ Mrs. Richardson explained that the memorial gifts will be used to help pay expenses for older people who may not be able to pay to stay at Fairhaven. Additional support arrived from the Benjamin Lyons Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution to create fundraising drives for Fairhaven.⁸⁶

⁷⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 31 May 1959, Sun, Page 12.

⁷⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 01 Jun 1959, Mon, Page 4.

⁸⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 19 Jun 1959, Sun, Page 14.

⁸¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 26 Jul 1959, Sun, Page 13.

⁸² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 28 Aug 1959, Fri, Page 15.

⁸³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 21 Sep 1959, Mon, Page 4.

⁸⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 27 Sep 1959, Sun, Page 19.

⁸⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 11 Oct 1959, Sun, Page 2.

⁸⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 13 Oct 1959, Tue, Page 5.

Architects Engaged

A milestone was recorded in late October 1959 when the Fairhaven Board announced the engagement of architects for Fairhaven.⁸⁷ O'Neil Ford, A. B. Swank and Roland Laney of Associated Architects, Inc. were selected. Ford, formerly a Denton resident, designed the Little Chapel In The Woods with Swank, located on the Texas Women's University campus in 1939. He also designed the First Christian Church in 1959 where a number of the Fairhaven Board were members, as board chair Mrs. Richardson and the pastor of First Christian Church, Rev. James Reed. Arch B. Swank, the architect of the Presbyterian Village residence in Dallas, planned in a similar manner to the Fairhaven. Roland Laney III, a Denton architect and grandson of William Laney, Sr. of the Denton County Poor Farm, supervised local construction efforts.

Mrs. Richardson asked Ford to design a home that would offer attractive and comfortable surroundings, a place fitting of her mother's contentment. Together they created Fairhaven which would become a unique building, designed by Ford with amenities catered to the elderly, such as long corridors where residents could walk regardless of weather.⁸⁸

U.S. Representative Frank Ikard met with the Fairhaven board on November 2nd to discuss applying for a Federal Housing loan. He recommended the Board ready materials for the new program start date of December 1st adding that up to 98% of the Fairhaven building loan could be financed.⁸⁹ Focusing on Fairhaven as a residence, not a nursing facility, the Board planned a building campaign to begin November 16th. Support for Fairhaven continued to grow with Bessie Shook presenting at the Sorooptimist Club, asking for their help in fundraising efforts.⁹⁰

Building Campaign

The Fairhaven building fundraiser began November 16, 1959 to raise \$95,000. Presented on the front page of the newspaper was the story that the Fairhaven was estimated to cost \$500,000. Donations are expected to pay for equipment and furnishings for Fairhaven which could initially have 80 rooms.⁹¹ The building campaign, headquarter at 100 West McKinney, was lead by the co-owner of Rhea-Williams Insurance Agency, Knox Rhea. Supporting Rhea were James Russell Jr., Tobe Jones Jr., Denny Vinson, Clayton Atkins, Emory Taylor, Fred Patterson, Joe Bowers, Mrs. Morris Kibler and Mrs. Wilson Ewan.⁹²

A full page ad appeared in the newspaper to answer questions about Fairhaven. Operations would be handled by an administrator reporting to the Fairhaven board and trustees composed of 40 person in Denton County. The non-profit home would be built after sufficient funds were raised for building and operating Fairhaven. Residents would be 65 for admission and "provided pleasant quarters, food and all routine medical and nursing care".⁹³ While exact cost are undetermined, anticipated fees will be \$125 per month. Fairhaven expected to host 120 guest,

⁸⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 25 Oct 1959, Sun, Page 3.

⁸⁸ Greater Dallas Christian Life Magazine, Mrs. Myrtle Richardson, 1996.

⁸⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 03 Nov 1959, Tue, Page 2.

⁹⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 08 Nov 1959, Sun, Page14.

⁹¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 15 Nov 1959, Sun, Page 1.

⁹² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 15 Nov 1959, Sun, Page 2.

⁹³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 15 Nov 1959, Sun, Page 10.

with fundraising to pay for furnishing rooms and for initial operating cost. The \$95,000 in pledges makes Fairhaven a reality, with fundraising to continue one month. The Fairhaven board of directors included: Mrs. Myrtle Richardson, president; Bessie Shook, vice-president; Christine Canafox, treasurer; Maurine Phillips, Rev. Janes Reed; Jimmie Priddy, secretary; W. F. Brooks Sr.; Ruth Ewan; Dr. Agnes Underwood; Leona Wilson; and Bonnie Holley.

Concurrent to the campaign, the annual Fairhaven Fair was hosted at the Southern Hotel, 309 S. Locust Street, in late November. Cakes, candies, decoration and a turkey give-away were included.⁹⁴ After the Fair, a door-to-door campaign was held with estimates of 200 women leading neighborhood canvasses, asking each household for a pledge to support the Fairhaven.⁹⁵ Collection of pledges continue through mid-December with an estimated 500 volunteer workers asking for support of Fairhaven.⁹⁶ The final December reported fundraising of the immediate goal for \$25,000 of the total \$95,000 total was almost reached. A total of \$24,281 was collected with 18% of businesses and 9% of residential gifts committed.⁹⁷ Part of these fund paid the \$5,000 cost to extend North Bell Avenue to the Fairhaven property. The pledges provided a dollar amount paid in advance and up to three years to pay the full amount.

January 1960 began new fundraising effort for Fairhaven. The Fairhaven board hosted a game party with paid reservations.⁹⁸ The game party was held in the Woman's Building in Denton with \$1 charged per ticket.⁹⁹ Interest in Fairhaven remained high as a number of persons from Denton traveled to Sherman to attend a seminar on the Care of the Aged sponsored by the State and County Health Departments.¹⁰⁰ Board members kept Fairhaven remembered in their activities. Rev. James Reed, pastor of First Christian Church beginning in 1956, was honored in April 1960 for his service in Denton as a Fairhaven board member, Kiwanis Club director, and selection as one of the top 10 ministers selected as "Preacher of the Year" by Pulpit Magazine.¹⁰¹ A second community game party was hosted in April with County Judge Jack Gray serving as auctioneer of cakes sold to support Fairhaven.¹⁰² Memorial gifts to Fairhaven continued with the death of Mrs. Sally Sharples.¹⁰³ The annual Fairhaven Fair was held in November, this year to include a raffle for a 1961 21 inch Zenith television.¹⁰⁴

Good news was gained for Fairhaven with the start of 1961. Ben Ivey, chair of the Fairhaven finance committee, reported that "the outlook is favorable to obtain a Federal loan for the construction of Fairhaven".¹⁰⁵ Dr. Hiram Friedsam, new Fairhaven trustee and president of the

⁹⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 22 Nov 1959, Sun, Page 17.

⁹⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 06 Dec 1959, Sun, Page 3.

⁹⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 14 Dec 1959, Mon, Page 12.

⁹⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 28 Nov 1959, Mon, Page 6.

⁹⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 24 Jan 1960, Sun, Page 2.

⁹⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 29 Jan 1960, Sun, Page 2.

¹⁰⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 13 Mar 1960, Sun, Page 20.

¹⁰¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 05 Apr 1960, Tue, Page 1.

¹⁰² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 21 Apr 1960, Thu, Page 2.

¹⁰³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 07 Jul 1960, Thu, Page 2.

¹⁰⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 20 Nov 1960, Sun, Page 14.

¹⁰⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 18 Jan 1961, Wed, Page 2.

Texas Society on Aging, offered encouragement with his vision that new construction of homes for the aged will begin in the next few years. The highlight of the Fairhaven board meeting was the review of initial plans for Fairhaven. The architectural drawing were prepared by Swank, Ford and Laney.

Ben Ivey reported in February 1961 that the Fairhaven land lot had doubled in value since its purchase two years prior. Ivey's finance report included that the Building Fund total \$9,200 with the Memorial Fund's balance of about \$500 and operating account balance of \$1,200, a total near \$11,000 in cash. Ivey reported that the Finance Committee is "engaged in preparing the data necessary for the processing of a loan for the construction of the Fairhaven home."¹⁰⁶ Also of note was the moving of the Opportunity Store to 212 East Hickory, the former Maytag Store. The Opportunity Store grossed about \$6,500 in its three years of operations with net profit of about \$3,000.

Community support for Fairhaven continued with new funding and commitments. The Denton Soroptimist Club, meeting at the Pat Boone County Inn, agreed to furnish a room at Fairhaven, setting aside \$500 in a savings account.¹⁰⁷ The Fairhaven Board and Trustees renewed memberships.¹⁰⁸ The Fairhaven Board comprised: Myrtle Richardson; Bessie Shook; Christine Canafax; Ruth Ewan; Bennie Holley; and Bettie Priddy. Included as trustees are: Ruth Anderson; Jack Bonds; Joe Bowers; W. F. Brooks; Mattie Cravens; Bruce Davis; Hiram Friedsam; Frank Hall; Burford Harrell; Mae Hollers; Annie Hughey; Ben Ivey; Etta Johnson; Edith Koiner; Lola Mann; Fred Minor; Walter Miller; Ed Morrison; Agnes Murphy; Wyn Murrell; E. A. Nall; R. B. Newmac; Maurine Phillips; Tom Richardson; Knox Rhea; Fred Rayzor; John Shrader; Edna Slark; Emery Taylor; Warren Whitson; Helen Wilson; Leona Wilson; and Jimmie Underwood.

The City of Denton released notice of a public hearing for the construction of Fairhaven Home on October 20, 1961.¹⁰⁹ The Denton Board of Adjustment met on October 30, 1961 and ruled in favor of Fairhaven. Zoning was approved for Fairhaven in a neighborhood specific to single-family homes.¹¹⁰ Reference was made that the Fairhaven is planned next to the new United (Trinity) Presbyterian Church.

An important note of context is the shifting of opinions during this time period that removed the stigma of housing for the elderly. The Progressive Architecture publication of March 1961 provide insights gain from post war experiences, references care for the elderly in Scandinavia.

One of the most valuable lessons that visitors have learned from special housing abroad is the philosophy that underlies programs for the elderly in Scandinavia. There one finds a tangible expressing of the conviction that older people who have served their countries long and well, and who can no longer serve even themselves without assistance, deserve

¹⁰⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 24 Feb 1961, Fri, Page 5.

¹⁰⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 19 Mar 1961, Sun, Page 14.

¹⁰⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 21 Sep 1961, Thu, Page 6.

¹⁰⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 20 Oct 1961, Fri, Page 2.

¹¹⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 31 Oct 1961, Tue, Page 2.

on the best. No effort is spared to make housing livable and attractive, with art objects and landscaping contributing to the beauty of the surroundings. These projects are not only the pride of the community, but the older people themselves are proud to live in them.

When Housing, even public housing, is allowed to be nothing more than a shelter its very permanence is a source of discouragement. In the field of public housing for the elderly, there are bright signs on the horizon. Some of the newer projects enhance not only the lives of the residents but also the communities of which they must be kept a vital part.¹¹¹

The following article in the *Progressive Architecture* publication describes the newly constructed Victoria Plaza in San Antonio, Texas, home of O'Neil Ford in 1961. The San Antonio Housing Authority initiated the Victoria Plaza project immediately after the passage of the 1956 housing law as an effort to produce the best possible environment for the elderly within the limitations of public housing.¹¹²

Building Loan submitted

Two major events occurred on December 17, 1961. Ben Ivey announced that the Fairhaven Board applied for a federal housing loan for almost \$500,000.¹¹³ On the same day, the Fairhaven Board hosted a reception for members of the Board and its Trustees to honor the Trustees.¹¹⁴ The event was hosted by the Richardson's at their home.

News was positive on the prospects for the Fairhaven loan during the March 1962 Board meeting. Ben Ivey and architect Roland Laney reported the loan application had been given "conditional but not final approval."¹¹⁵ One of the Fairhaven supporters appeared on the television show "Queen for a Day". Mrs. Ward Maxwell of 607 Pearl Street was selected by host Jack Bailey. When asked as a contestant on this national show, what she would like to have if she was Queen for a Day, Mrs. Maxwell said she would request "a television set for the Denton Fairhaven Home for the Aged."¹¹⁶ Her wish was granted and the Fairhaven gained its first TV. During the September Board meeting, the Board approved acceptance of the federal loan to build Fairhaven, anticipating that the loan should be approved in Washington before the close of 1962.¹¹⁷

High honor was attributed to Bessie Shook, vice-chair of the Fairhaven Board when Monday, September 24, 1962 was declared by the mayor of Denton as "Miss Bessie Shook Day."¹¹⁸ Dr. Matthews, president of North Texas State University (UNT) honored her early contributions as one of the first English faculty member of the NTS Normal school. Over 100 others join in recognizing Miss Shook.

¹¹¹ "Public housing for the elderly," *Progressive architecture*, 1961 Mar., v. 42, page 147.

¹¹² "Public housing for the elderly," *Progressive architecture*, 1961 Mar., v. 42, page 149.

¹¹³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 17 Dec 1961, Sun, Page 2.

¹¹⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 17 Dec 1961, Sun, Page 13.

¹¹⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 14 Mar 1963, Wed, Page 9.

¹¹⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 10 Jun 1962, Sun, Page 14.

¹¹⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 23 Sep 1962, Sun, Page 15.

¹¹⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 26 Sep 1962, Wed, Page 13.

Two Fairhaven newsworthy events concluded the year. The annual Fairhaven Fair, hosted in November, was extended an additional day as a result of “widespread public interest.”¹¹⁹ In December, U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough visited Denton and toured the site of Fairhaven in support of the proposed home for the aged.¹²⁰

Building Loan Secured

In January 1963, the federal loan for \$484,000 was approved for Fairhaven with note that provides for construction of 48 housing units.¹²¹ Notice was provide by U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough’s office in Washington to Mrs. Richardson, Fairhaven’s Board chair. It was estimated that it would take several months to obtain bids for the project and construction would take six to eight months. Sometime during 1964 Fairhaven would open with monthly expenses per unit estimated to be between \$79 to \$139 per room with additional expenses for board. Associated Architects for the project included Roland Laney of Denton, Arch Swank of Dallas and O’Neil Ford formerly of Denton and now of San Antonio.

Acme Brick announced a \$1,000,000 expansion to the Denton plant, one of the largest industries in Denton for over 50 years. They announced that the first 10,000 bricks to be produced would be given to Fairhaven.¹²² Accolades began for Myrtle Richardson as chair of the Fairhaven Board. The Jaycee proclaimed Mrs. Richard accomplishments for Fairhaven with a special award to recognize her efforts.¹²³

Three contract bid requests for Fairhaven construction were announced by Roland Laney on September 1963, due for opening on October 1st for a general construction contractor, a kitchen appliance contractor and a carpet and drapery contractor.¹²⁴ The bid opening was postponed to October 16.¹²⁵ The final event for the year was an open house hosted by the Richardson’s for the Fairhaven Board in December. The architects were present with government official from the loan administration office to answer questions and to show illustrations of Fairhaven plans.¹²⁶

Significance to Denton

Fairhaven’s significance was summarized in an Editorial marking the groundbreaking for the Fairhaven which occurred January 19th, 1964.¹²⁷ The paper celebrated the vision and dreams of a group in Denton to aid and assist its older community, lead by Mrs. Myrtle Richardson and supported by a dedicated team. When Mrs. Richardson attempted to locate housing in Denton for her mother in 1954, she realized there were no pleasant home for older residents. Supported by members of First Christian Church and in 1956 by it new minister, Rev. James Reed, the dream of Mrs. Richardson was adopted as a project by the Denton Business and Professional Woman’s Club. The project to create a haven residential home for the aging in Denton priced

¹¹⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 19 Nov 1962, Mon, Page 15.

¹²⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 04 Dec 1962, Sun, Page 1.

¹²¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 03 Jan 1963, Thu, Page 1.

¹²² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 20 Jan 1963, Sun, Page 4.

¹²³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 27 Jan 1963, Sun, Page 13.

¹²⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 02 Sep 1963, Mon, Page 5.

¹²⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 30 Sep 1963, Mon, Page 2.

¹²⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 13 Dec 1963, Fri, Page 10.

¹²⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 19 Jan 1964, Sun, Page 20.

fairly for those over 65 years of age developed as fair haven, incorporated as the non-profit Fairhaven corporation.

The Editorial observed that “overcoming some of the early obstacles of the dream probably never would have been tackled by men – it took the patience of women.”¹²⁸ After raising funds to purchase the land, the Fairhaven board turned attention to the next obstacle, securing the federal loan for \$480,000 for the building. With the groundbreaking, the construction of the building began. The dream for a superior residential home for the aged, in the form of an apartment building instead of a clinic or nursing home, became a point of pride for Denton. The Editorial concluded that Fairhaven “promises to be another excellent asset for Denton.”

Groundbreaking

“I hope someday we can put up a big sign out there: Happiness Lives Here”, said Bey Ivey to a group of about 50 at the groundbreaking ceremony for Fairhaven.¹²⁹ As Board members stacked gold painted bricks at the site, Ivey added that “this will be a home where elderly people may live surrounded by beauty.” Construction at the tree-studded lot for the 57-person home was scheduled for October. Ivey concluded his remarks that “this was in the beginning a community enterprise, it is today a community enterprise and it will be in the future a community enterprise.”

A third Fairhaven Memorial fund was organized in March 1964 as the Cecil King Fairhaven Garden Fund supported creation of gardens around Fairhaven.¹³⁰ This complemented the original Fairhaven building fund and the memorial fund for assisting the furnishing of the Fairhaven. The Fairhaven Store continued to raise funds for the building¹³¹ and the TWU Demonstration School offered its support to the Fairhaven Store.¹³²

At the annual Fairhaven Board meeting, members were updated and commitments renewed. Fairhaven would have 48 rooms, 38 single room apartments and 9 double room units. Each room would have a sink, refrigerator, stove units and private bath with furniture obtained from Sears for about \$450 per room.¹³³ Elections for six year terms as trustees included: Jo Bowers; Christine Canafax; Mattie Cravens; Ben Ivey; Edith Koiner; Charles Morris; Dr. Agness Murphy; Maurine Phillips; T. H. Richardson; John Shrader and Mrs. W. A. Wilson. Returning to the Board: Myrtle Richardson, president; Bessie Shook, vice-president; Christine Canafax, treasurer; Bettie Headlee, secretary.

Open House

The community project of the Fairhaven opened for tours in late November 1964 for the progress of the construction project.¹³⁴ The Board's Open House recognized the Denton community for its support of the Fairhaven. Anticipation was high, without notice that there was no carpeting, no

¹²⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 19 Jan 1964, Sun, Page 20.

¹²⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 20 Jan 1964, Mon, Page 1.

¹³⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 08 Mar 1964, Sun, Page 13.

¹³¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 22 Mar 1964, Sun, Page 6.

¹³² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 05 Apr 1964, Sun, Page 18.

¹³³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 24 Apr 1964, Thu, Page 26.

¹³⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 22 Nov 1964, Sun, Page 1.

furniture and that few rooms were completed. A series of four articles by Mike Engleman, editor of the Denton Record-Chronicle, identified two important aspects of the Fairhaven.¹³⁵ First, Fairhaven was a non-profit organization. Second, Fairhaven is not an ‘old folks home’ but designed as a home for people in good health who want to live in a pleasant surroundings in an “apartment house” style setting. Opening was anticipated in January 1965 for Fairhaven, to include 20 single units without kitchenettes; 19 single units with kitchenettes; five double rooms without kitchenettes; four double rooms with kitchenettes; four lounge areas; a washeteria; a large dining room and landscaped grounds. Fairhaven was designed as a home for those over 62, without housekeeping or cooking chores to enjoy a pleasant environment.

To make Fairhaven self-sustaining, a final push for \$22,000 was requested to open Fairhaven. Basic items, still unfunded, including three months of operating cash required by the federal government totaling about \$5,000; landscaping and room furnishings.¹³⁶ Ben Ivey stressed that Fairhaven “is a community thing, and it would be wonderful if we could have many small donations – from \$5 and up – from a great many people.” At the end of January 1965, this sum was raised and the 10 year dream to build Fairhaven was becoming reality.¹³⁷

Fairhaven Opens on Valentine’s Day 1965

“Fairhaven Lights are On”, ten years from the beginning of the concepts, was the headline for the local newspaper on February 14, 1965.¹³⁸ The two-winged building is connected with a walkway in the center of the each wing. Courtyards between the wings provided shade and landscape enjoyed in person or viewed via floor to ceiling windows in each room. On entry a front desk and reception area flows into the main lounge, centered behind the focal entrance, with a fireplace and sitting area for television viewing. Three other lounges are included in the design, two on the east side that doubled as the library and crafts area. The design reflected the instructions to the architects that Fairhaven was not to be a convalescent home for the elderly.

The Denton Record Chronicle publication about the Fairhaven on February 14, 1965 provides a virtuous summary of the building:

It is as comfortable as a good hotel but obviously designed with the older person in mind. Wide halls are all equipped with bannisters along their sides for any person who needs them.

The 29 single and 9 double rooms are tastefully furnished with huge closets, comfortable beds and beautiful tiled baths but again the tub and shower is equipped with convenient hand bars and each bedroom has an intercom system with the front desk so that help is only a hand’s reach away.

¹³⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 23 Nov 1964, Mon, Page 1.

¹³⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 25 Nov 1964, Wed, Page 1.

¹³⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 31 Jan 1965, Sun, Page 47.

¹³⁸ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 14 Feb 1965, Sun, Page 10.

The Fairhaven's operation will depend on monthly rentals from residents, proceeds from the Opportunity story, already maintained by Fairhaven, income from the memorial fund already set up and gifts from benevolent individuals.

A single resident of Fairhaven will pay \$74 per month for a room, without kitchenette, or \$80 with kitchenette. Double rooms will go at \$128 without kitchenette and \$134 with. In addition, each person is required to buy three meals a day from the dining room, which will cost \$55 per month. Fairhaven already has 17 guests signed up.

One beautiful feature of Fairhaven noticed by all visitors are the courtyards inside the wings of the building. The building itself is constructed in rolling, wooded country and much care was taken to keep the natural look of the land and trees.

In the courtyards, three large wooden platforms lead off from glass sliding doors. The platforms are pierced by large living trees and during summer will provide a shaded place to sit and talk.

The near \$500,000 building has central heating and air conditioning and consists of a large dining room and kitchen, recreation room, main lounge, three satellite lounges, offices for the manager and dietitian and the bedrooms. The building was constructed of solid fireproof materials and has many exits in case of emergency.

The Fairhaven rules provide that members may bring their own furniture if they desire to furnish their room. They may contract for maid services and have telephone and televisions in their rooms if they desire.

But the main thing Fairhaven should be is a happy place. Ben Ivey, the manager, says "I really feel that 'happiness lives here' and should be the goal we always strive to maintain."

The formal dedication of Fairhaven occurred with a dinner in the Fairhaven dining room. Mrs. Myrtle Richardson welcomed the Board and guests, Ruth Anderson provided the ten year history of the Fairhaven, Ben Ivey focused on the community's efforts to support the Fairhaven and the Rev. Paul Young, minister of the neighboring Trinity Presbyterian Church, presented the dedicatory remarks.¹³⁹ The formal Open House to the Denton community was hosted by the Board on Sunday, February 28, 1965.¹⁴⁰ Throughout the following year, many special events were hosted at Fairhaven with Fairhaven being a venue of select occasions and celebrations.

Community support for Fairhaven continued after its opening. By January 1966, Fairhaven hosted 27 residents and a new director, retired Air Force Lt. Colonel Jess Schmidt.¹⁴¹ The Fairhaven Board reported that 1966 should prove to be a good year for Fairhaven.¹⁴² On that

¹³⁹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 23 Feb 1965, Tue, Page 2.

¹⁴⁰ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 24 Feb 1965, Wed, Page 6.

¹⁴¹ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 16 Jan 1966, Sun, Page 25.

¹⁴² Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 30 Jan 1966, Sun, Page 28.

anniversary of the first year of operations, the Chapel at Fairhaven opened.¹⁴³ Myrtle Richardson was again elected as president of the Fairhaven Board.¹⁴⁴ With the financial success and opening of the Fairhaven, the Fairhaven Store continued sales for the repayment of the federal building loan, while the Showcase Sale at Fairhaven was created by the residents of Fairhaven. The goal for the Showcase Sale was to raise funds to purchase a stereo for the lobby.¹⁴⁵

In 1967, the Fairhaven was honored by the North Texas Association of Homes for the Aging as the most beautiful home for seniors citizens in North Texas.¹⁴⁶ Three years after opening, 49 residents lived at Fairhaven.¹⁴⁷ Fairhaven became fully integrated with the Denton community with multiple events occurring at Fairhaven.

Fairhaven Summary

Review of the current structure compared to original designs indicates no physical changes to the building. Only a temporary wall was created behind the front desk as a consultation area to provide privacy in conversations between residents and staff.

Fairhaven Retirement Home is a significant structure, designed by O'Neil Ford, with his former partner Arch Swank and Roland Laney. Myrtle Richardson of Denton developed the idea of a retirement home for Denton. By 1963 she had contacted O'Neil Ford to design Fairhaven. Ford involved his old partner Arch Swank of Dallas. Local architect Roland Laney was hired by Ford to assist with construction management. The structure had to be economical to build, easy to maintain and provide a nice, quiet environment for residents. Each room opened onto a tranquil courtyard, and was designed so that the rooms were staggered and no one had to look into another residents room while their doors were open.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 13 Feb 1966, Sun, Page 7.

¹⁴⁴ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 14 Sep 1966, Wed, Page 10.

¹⁴⁵ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 28 Nov 1966, Sun, Page 5.

¹⁴⁶ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 07 May 1967, Sun, Page 8.

¹⁴⁷ Denton Record-Chronicle (Denton, Texas), 16 Oct 1967, Mon, Page 3.

¹⁴⁸ Mike Cochran, O'Neil Ford: Denton Architect, June 2012, <http://www.dentonhistory.net/page84/>

Biography of O'Neil Ford (1905 – 1982)¹⁴⁹

O'Neil Ford was arguably the most prominent architect to have come from Texas. In his long and distinguished career, he achieved both popular and critical success, yet retained a strong life-long link to his hometown of Denton.

Born Otha Neil Ford in Pink Hill, Texas in 1905, he moved to Denton in 1917 after the death of his father. His mother, Mrs. L.B. Ford, kept boarders in their home at 304 W. Avenue "D", just west of the campus of North Texas State Teachers College (now the University of North Texas). A graduate of Denton High School, Ford attended N.T.S.T.C. for two years, studying English and physics. Financial problems forced him to withdraw from college but he continued his studies through a correspondence course while working at Dyche's Corner, a hamburger stand at the corner of Avenue "A" and Hickory Streets.

In 1926, Ford took a position as an assistant to Dallas architect David Williams. His first work with Williams was drafting for the old First Presbyterian Church on South Elm Street (demolished in 1965). The first residence he designed was built in 1929 on North Bell Avenue. In this period, Ford designed an open air theater for the campus of N.T.S.T.C., and two structures that were never built, a 130 foot memorial tower and a student center.

Ford and his partner Arch Swank designed several residences in Denton in the late 1930s, but the high point of their Denton work in this period was the design and construction of the Little Chapel in the Woods on the campus of the College of Industrial Arts (now Texas Women's University). It was the Chapel, completed in 1939, which would propel Ford into a position of national prominence. Eleanor Roosevelt spoke to a crowd of 4,000 at the dedication on November 1, 1939.

Ford's list of achievements is considerable. In 1960 Ford was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. He was appointed to the National Council of the Arts by President Johnson and in 1974 would be declared a "National Historic Landmark" by the Council, the only individual ever so honored.

This correspondence school architect from Denton would lecture at Harvard, at Cambridge, become a Professor of Architecture at the University of Virginia and have a chair in architecture named after him at the University of Texas at Austin.

Among his best known works were the Little Chapel in the Woods, Trinity University in San Antonio, Skidmore College in New York, the Denton Municipal Building, the Tower of the Americas in San Antonio, the Bell Tower at the University of Dallas, and Texas Instruments buildings in Dallas, Italy, France and England.

Late in his career, Ford recalled the influences of his days in Denton and credited his pursuit of the creative life with his fascination with the Denton County Courthouse. Ford said, "I used to

¹⁴⁹ Mike Cochran, A Catalog of the Architectural Works of O'Neil Ford in Denton. City of Denton Historic Landmark Commission, 1992.

just stand there, wondering how they ever got it up I was in Denton just the other day ... so I went over to look at the courthouse again and still don't know how they ever did that blasted, blessed thing."

O'Neil Ford died on July 20, 1982 in San Antonio, Texas.

Biography of Arch B. Swank (1913 – 1999)¹⁵⁰

Arch B. Swank Jr. was one of the great innovative figures of Texas architecture. He was born in Wills Point, Texas. He graduated in 1936 as a member of the first class to complete Texas A&M's five-year architecture program (Good 1989). Upon graduation he moved to Dallas, where his professional career flourished.

In 1937 he entered a partnership with O'Neil Ford, the architect whose detail drawings Swank had handed out during his first job as a docent at the Southern Pine Association House at the Exposition in 1933~34 (Good 1989). The two men worked together with a small group of artisans in a creative workshop, mostly designing residences and researching various aspects of construction. In 1939 he and Ford designed the "Chapel in the Woods" at Texas State College for Women (now Texas Women's University). The building, known for its embodiment of Regional Modernism, was the team's "first significant nonresidential commission" (Henry 1993, 278).

The partnership with Ford dissolved in 1941 when the Army required Swank's service as a commissioned officer in WWII. One year after his discharge, he entered a partnership with Roscoe DeWitt (Good 1989). The architectural firm of DeWitt and Swank emerged as one of the most successful in Texas after the war. Among their most prestigious jobs was the Preston Center branch of Neiman Marcus department stores (1952), which consisted of 63,000 square feet of luxury shopping space ("Station wagon Store Neiman-Marcus Co., Preston center, Dallas" 1952). In 1951 Swank was elected president of the Dallas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, promoting the importance of urban design and environmental causes. He returned to individual practice in 1952.

Throughout his career Swank consistently sought out opportunities for innovation and collaboration with others. He worked frequently with O'Neil Ford in the 1950's and 60's. Under the name Associated Architects and Land Planners, Swank, Ford, Richard Colley and planner Sam Zisman designed the semiconductor complex in Richardson (1958) for Texas Instruments. The same team, joined by Mexican architect Felix Candela, also secured the project of the Great Southwest Corporation's industrial park in Arlington (1958). These projects are well known for their innovative hyperbolic paraboloid building structures (Good 1989).⁶ At the time of their design no building codes existed which addressed these structures. Swank and his associates

¹⁵⁰ Randy Jensen, Created for the University of Texas Libraries, Austin, Texas, <https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00082/aaa-00082.html>. References these works:

Good, R. Lawrence, "Arch B. Swank Jr.," *Texas Architect* 39:6 (Nov/Dec 1989), p.73.

Henry, Jay C., *Architecture in Texas. 1895-1945*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993, p.278.

"Station wagon Store Neiman-Marcus Co., Preston center, Dallas," *Magazine of Building (Architectural Forum ed.)* 96:136-43 (Jan 1952), p.136

constructed a thin concrete hyperbolic paraboloid and performed the load tests themselves. The test shell was a tremendous success, holding two and a half times its design load (Good 1989).

From 1955 to 1967, Swank oversaw the design and construction of a complex of buildings, United Presbyterian Homes, in Waxahachie, Texas, housing a program of care for needy children and the elderly." He continued to work on this project, designing additions for UPH until well into the 1970's. Kerr County commissioned other significant projects during this period, including the Correction/Detention Facility and the Courthouse Annex (1974-1979).

He was married to Patsy Swank, an award winning journalist, who has been recognized for her excellent coverage of architecture.

(If Appropriate)

Confusion about Fairhaven design resolved¹⁵¹

In conversations with Roland Laney and Arch Swank, Mike Cochran, frequently consulted with Ford's former partners to catalog Ford's projects in Denton. Cochran, local historian with specific interest in architectural history, created the Historic Landmark Commission work to catalogue Ford's works as former chairperson. Swank and Laney were very helpful to Cochran in creating this list of Ford structures and not shy about correcting misattribution of their works to Ford, which did happen on occasion and they made sure to correct the record. Fairhaven was designed by Ford in his partnership with Swank and Laney during the Associated Architects contract with the Fairhaven Board.

During the 1960s, Ford was demanded as a world recognized architect, yet never lost contact with his roots in Denton nor his relationships with friends created prior to his fame. Living in San Antonio, Arch Swank worked with Ford to create the physical floor plans, included in this document. Ford's design was recorded by Swank, based in Dallas, and locally supervised by Laney of Denton. When Ford was contacted by Myrtle Richardson they worked together to design a concept for Fairhaven. Ford's forte was in "big picture" conceptualizing of the work and with that done, turned the day to day operations over to his partners and colleagues. Arch Swank and Roland Laney depended on for the nuts and bolts work on the project, following Ford's design.

The Fairhaven Board's contact was with Associated Architect, the collaboration of Ford, Swank and Laney to create Fairhaven. Texas State Law held the contracting firm as accountable for all work; therefore, individual signatures for associate work was status que and acceptable.

Cochran pursued this further. Contacting Duane and Jane Landry, partners with Ford on like projects including the Denton Civic Center, Duane returned a letter:

¹⁵¹ Mike Cochran, Letter to the Mayor of Denton, May 14, 2012, Cochran personal collection.

Dear Mr. Cochran,

This is in response to your questions regarding the significance of the seal, name, and registration number on a set of construction documents.

My understanding of the applicable law in Texas is that in a partnership arrangement, such as that of Ford, Swank and Laney, any of the partners, they all being registered architects in the State of Texas, could sign and seal a set of construction documents done under that partner's supervision. The signing individual may take on a special responsibility within the partnership for production of the contract documents. However, in a partnership, all partners have liabilities under the state laws. In matters of design, any or all of the partners, or another individual, who is ordinarily, but not necessarily, a member of the firm, might within the law do the preliminary and schematic design work. Specifically, regarding this case, the fact that the architect of record was Arch Swank does not mean that O'Neil was not the designer. I think to indicate or imply otherwise is to misconstrue the Texas laws regulating the practice of architecture.

Sincerely,

Duane Landry, FAIA

Cochran also contacted Carolyn Peterson, of Ford, Powell, and Carson Architects. She worked on many of the City of Denton projects and was a keynote speaker at the Ford Symposium held at the Denton City Hall in 1993. She replied:

Mike,

Boone (Powell) and I discussed this and agree that the signing of a project by one member of an "Associated Architect" firm does not automatically determine that person's isolated involvement, or domination, with a project. Sometimes one partner signs the documents because the most active one is out of town when the project must be at a deadline to go out for bids, or, the signer could have led the working drawings while the another partner could have initiated the design of the project.

Carolyn

Carolyn Peterson, FAIA

Cochran also consulted with former Fairhaven board members. They were proud that Ford designed Fairhaven and understood that Roland Laney and Arch Swank were frequently in attendance in their Board meetings since Ford was not locally available. The board members were in close contact with Laney and Swank who were involved in the day to day running of the Fairhaven project. Thousands of details, schedules and supplies had to be worked out and Laney, who as the sole Denton resident also attended many of the meetings where construction was discussed. If there were larger problems Swank became involved. It is relevant that most of the

documents between the Fairhaven board and the architects were to or from Ford, Swank and Laney, Associated Architects.

Fairhaven lacks comparison as a beautiful building contrasted to the Little Chapel in the Woods, located less than a mile apart, but Fairhaven has a place in the body of work of a significant architect, O'Neil Ford.

Significances of Fairhaven is well discovered in the vision, respect and percipience of a residential home designed for the elderly in the Denton.