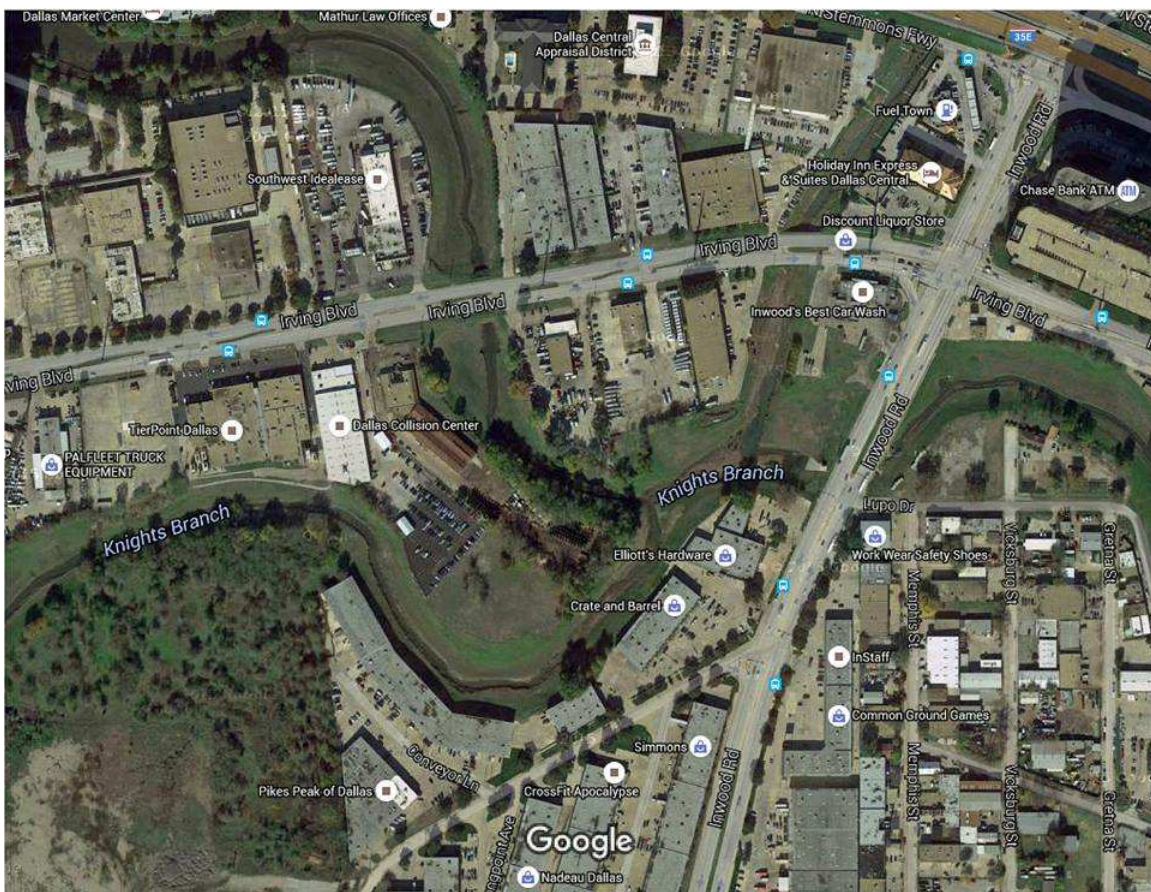


The "Point of Origin"

Jim Barnes, 17th April 2017

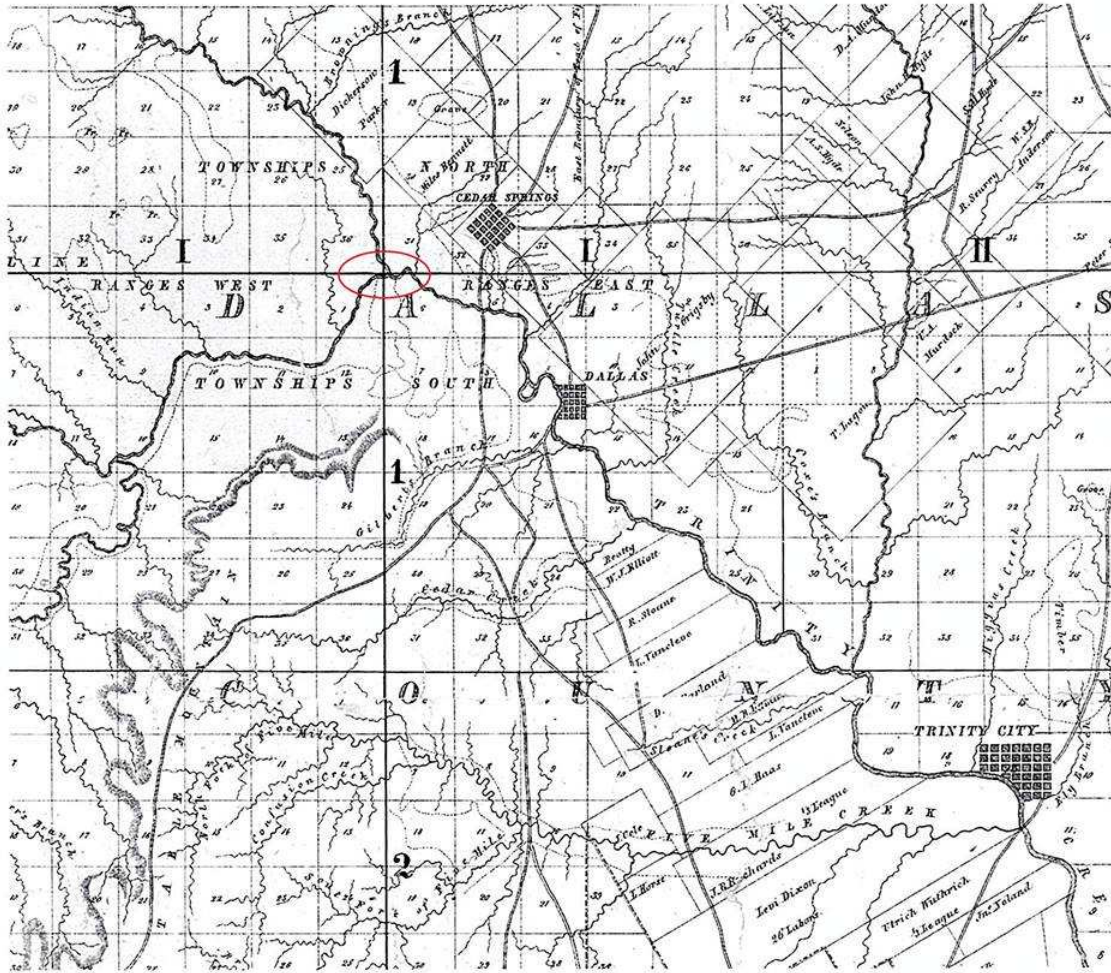
An often seen, but seldom understood, Dallas historic site is still clearly visible -- west of Inwood Road, just south of Irving Boulevard. Here, where the West Fork met the Elm Fork, in the 1840s a stake was placed to begin survey of Peters Colony land.

Google Maps



The so-called *Peters' Colony* (officially entitled "The Texas Emigration and Land Company") was a private company contracted by the Republic of Texas to bring pioneer White Settlers into north Texas. Single men were awarded half a square mile of free land, married couples were given a full square mile. Ownership title would be granted if they lived on their claim for three years and started a farm there.

The Peters Colony survey system loosely imitated the Public Land Survey System that the United States of America had used since 1785. To start the square-mile grid, a “*point of origin*” was arbitrarily assigned to a site just upstream of the confluence the West Fork and Elm Forks of the Trinity River. The Trinity River was moved to a new course during the 1920-1930s, but vestiges of the old channels still remain and are clearly visible.



This detail from Henry O. Hedgcoxe’s 1852 map of “The Surveyed Part of the Peters Colony” depicts the area around Dallas and Cedar Springs.

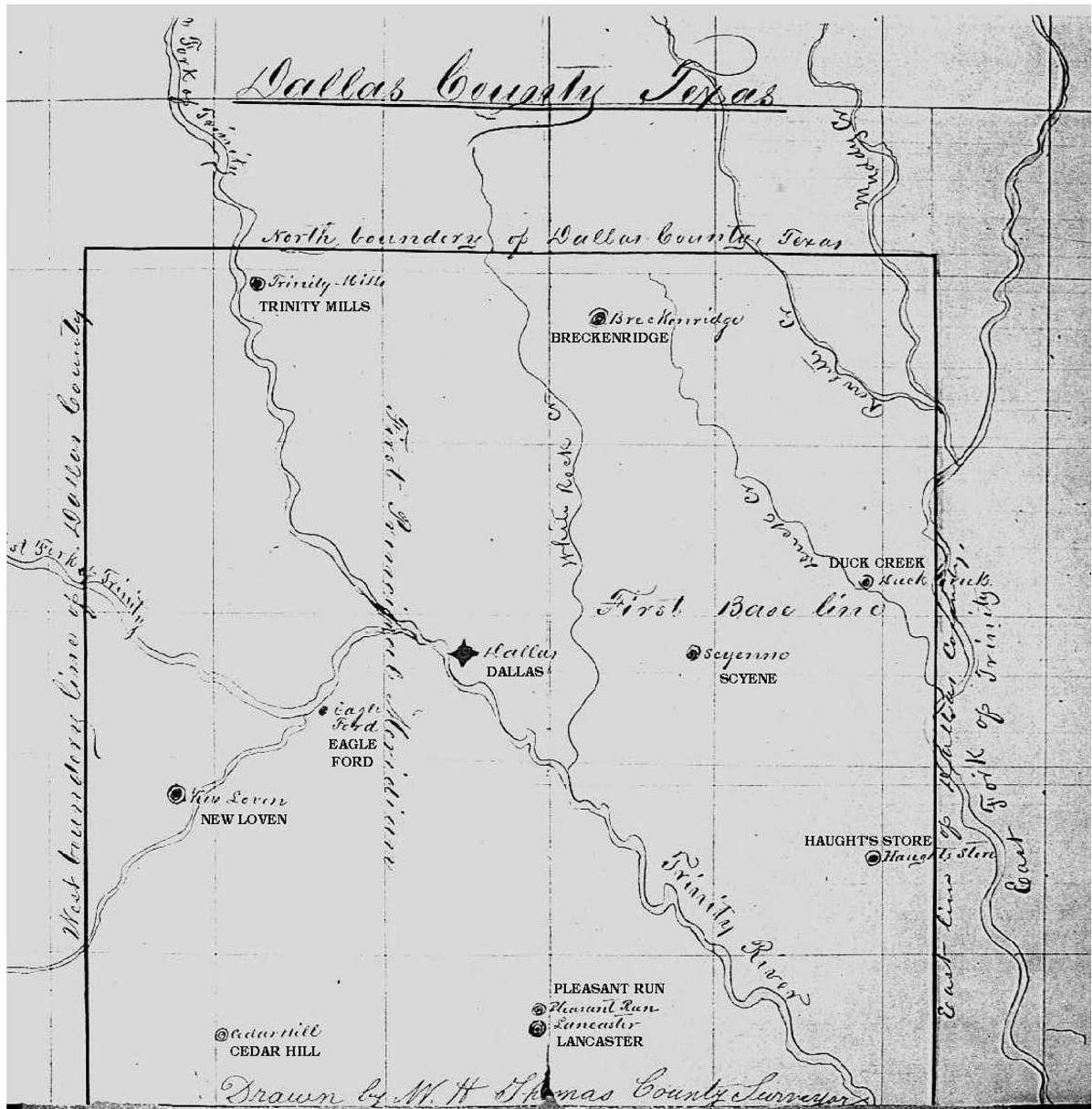
Detail from a map printed in Legacies Journal; Spring 2016; page 5

The William Myers Section was Section #19 of Township 1 South, Range 1 East. Modern Hampton Road runs along the primary north-south “*First Meridian*”. Western segments of Irving Boulevard run along the east-west “*First Base Line*”. Many major streets of western Dallas County re-trace the old section-lines, including: Davis, Remond, Beckley, Singleton, Westmoreland, Illinois, Kiest, Chaulk Hill, Marsh, Midway, Inwood, Preston, Mockingbird, Lovers, Royal, Lovers Lane, and so on.



The “point of origin” at the junction of the old channels of the West Fork and Elm Fork of the Trinity River is today a quiet grove of trees visible from Inwood Road. When I walked back onto the site about ten years I could find no monument or marker stake.

Map of Dallas County, Texas, circa 1866



Source: National Archives microfilm publication, M1126, Post Office Department Reports of Site Locations, 1837 - 1950, Roll 570: Texas, Concho - Dawson Counties

Circa 1866 map by the County Surveyor, showing the "First Principal Meridian" and "First Base Line".

(End)