

# Presbyterian church site in West Dallas

## 1886

James D. Barnes, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026



*Detail from the 2026 aerial photo-map from website of the Dallas Central Appraisal District  
with notations added – site location: approx: 32.7648°N; 96.8478°W*

By a deed document signed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1886, B.M. Bradford, foster parent of the last children of deceased William and Rachel Coombes, sold a strip of land at the southwest corner of the William Coombes Survey "in consideration of the sum of one dollar ⋯ to J.W. Thompson, J.L. Thompson, C.F. Bolanz, E.L. Snodgrass, H.W. Gruber, J.D. Padgett, W.B. Smith, D.G. Shelby, and James McKeand, Deacons of the 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of Dallas ⋯ for the use of said Presbyterian Church (as a house of Public Worship)." (Dallas County Deed Records, Volume 76, pages 279-280). The strip was 60 feet wide, running south from the Fort Worth Road 570 feet to the south boundary of the William Coombes Survey--- about 8/10 acre in area.

No church structure was ever built there; and there are no accounts of any Presbyterian congregation ever organizing in this West Dallas neighborhood. Instead, about three miles away, a new *Oak Cliff Presbyterian Church* was organized in January of 1890. It is interesting to note that the "E.L. Snodgrass" cited as a Deacon in this church purchase was a close lieutenant to Thomas L. Marsalis in the creation and opening of that Oak Cliff addition in 1887. B.M. Bradford left no particular history of his having any participation in the Presbyterian denomination, and similarly provides a Church of Christ congregation with a similar land donation nearby. He's simply benevolent to churches with his land holdings.

I found no indexed deed record of 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church selling this parcel prior to 1913, and judging from early aerial photographs taken in the 1920s and 1930 the site sat unutilized until after *Texas State Highway 1B* was created, by the widening of *Fort Worth Avenue*, in the mid-1930s. A "Last Frontier Motel" built here in 1946, and was later replaced with the present "Motel 6" construction, which Dallas Central Appraisal District dates to year 1987. For these motels, the sloping site was filled and leveled toward its south end, and then cut deeply downward beyond, during construction of the 1957 *Dallas Fort Worth Turnpike* – and its later widening as *U.S. Interstate Highway 30*.

In 1886 this site must have had a quite pleasant view up the valley of Coombes Creek, toward the south-southwest-- terrain where the *Stevens Park Golf Course* now resides. Why a church was deeded such a long narrow parcel is unknown.

*(End)*