

ST. MARY OF CARMEL: Church and School

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Map detail from website of the Dallas Central Appraisal District, showing the land of St. Mary of Carmel, located on the southeast corner of Singleton Boulevard (formerly Eagle Ford Road) and Vilbig Road (formerly called 1st Street) [Feb. 2026].

Here, a blue line traces the perimeter of *St. Mary of Carmel* real estate as shown on their map, which isn't necessarily most accurate.

St. Mary of Carmel is named in honor of the patron saint of the Roman Catholic church's *Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel*, often known simply as the *Carmelites*, or the *Carmelite Order*, a monastic group started during the Crusades. This particular Carmelite facility was established by a subgroup began in 1562 called *The Order of Discalced Carmelites* (*Discalced* literally meaning "without shoes").¹ In particular, *Discalced Carmelite* priest Father Sebastian Valles (1905-1985) came from Spain and started this congregation in 1937.²

This article will not attempt to provide a full account of the growth of this compound of buildings, parking lots, and playgrounds. Only a few highlights along its history of development will be cited here.



The main sanctuary of *St. Mary of Carmel* church is seen here, along *Vilbig Road*. Its construction was completed in 1966 and dedicated by Bishop Gorman.³

[Photo by author, February 2026]

St. Mary of Carmel was damaged by the April 1957 tornado that ripped across Oak Cliff and West Dallas.⁴

In September of 1954, less than four months after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to end segregation, with its *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, *St. Mary of Carmel School* announced that it had already registered a Catholic negro student.⁵ This negro was registered as a student but was still on a "waiting list"; but this establishes the possibility that *St. Mary of Carmel* might claim itself as having been the first desegregated school in Dallas. The Dallas Independent School District did not similarly desegregate until many years later. In the 1970s desegregation became a neighborhood issue nearby with *Benito Juarez* and *Fred Douglass Elementary Schools*.

In 1953 *St. Mary of Carmel* was thankful that its neighborhood area had finally been annexed inside the City limits. With new Dallas City government over the area came new street signs, street grading, police protection.⁶



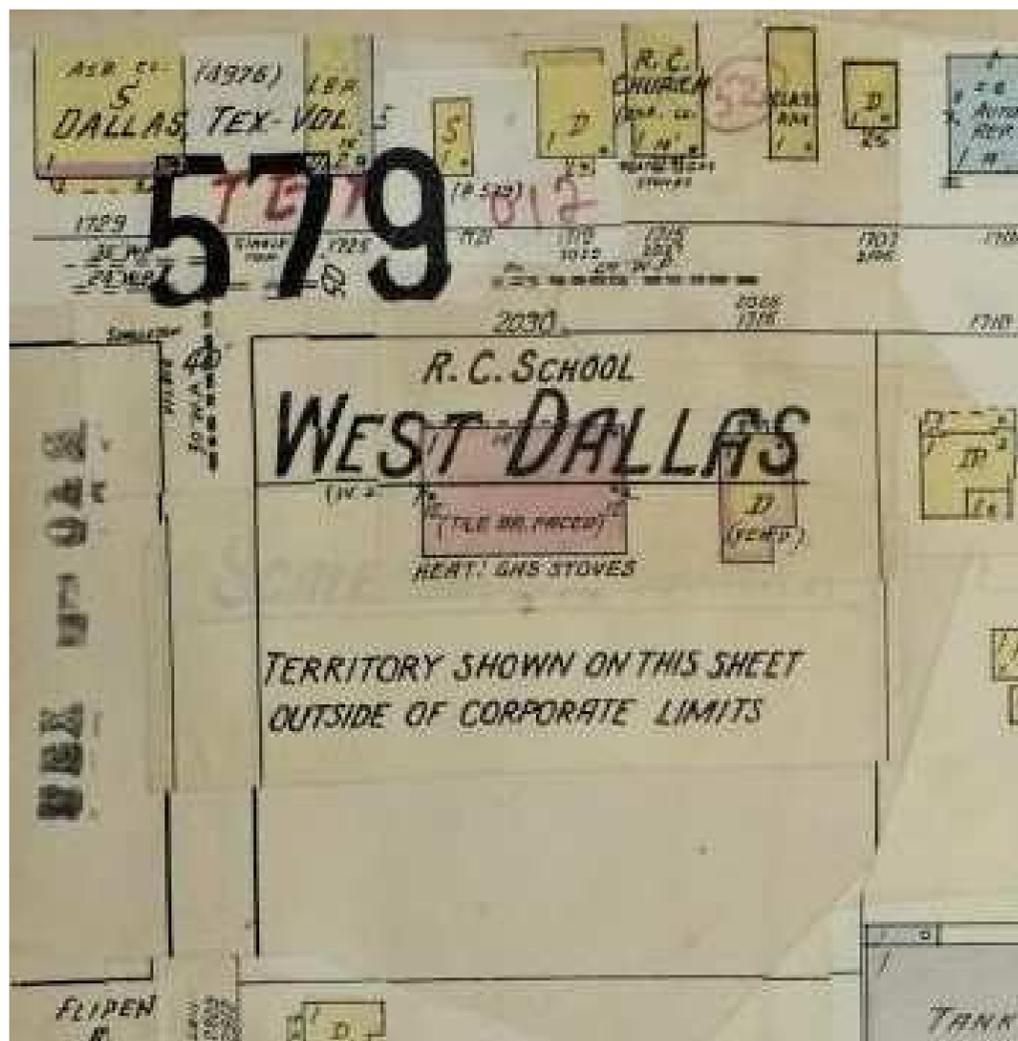
1949: Father Sebastian Valles watching construction of a new *Carmelite Seminary*, located a bit over three miles southwest, on *West Davis Avenue* at *Chalk Hill Road*.⁷

In 1947 planning had started for expanding the school grounds on the south side of Singleton Boulevard with a new church sanctuary complex for *St. Mary of Carmel*.⁸



The masonry school building of *St. Mary of Carmel*, facing north onto *Singleton Boulevard*, was built in 1944 and dedicated by Bishop Joseph Lynch.⁹

[Photo by author, February 2026]



1950 Sanborn Insurance map, Dallas, Texas, Volume 5, Sheet 579 – detail fragment.

A wooden 1941 church building for *St. Mary of Carmel* (now gone) seen here on the north side of *Singleton Blvd.*; while the surviving 1944 masonry school building appears across the street, with a brick veneer dwelling to its east. This was an era before refrigerated air-conditioning was used in such buildings, which were heated by gas stoves.



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Father Sebastian Valles came to America in 1931 from his native Spain—at about age 26. In the Spanish Civil War one of his brothers fought for Marshal Francisco Franco, at the same time that another brother fought with the Republicans against Franco. Both survived.¹⁰ Already an ordained Carmelite priest when arrived in Dallas, Sebastian Valles' fluency in Spanish language and understanding of Hispanic culture were ideal for serving the impoverished Mexicans moving into West Dallas. He started the *St. Mary of Carmel* church in 1937, at the time the old *Benito Juarez Elementary School* students were being moved by Dallas Independent School District into the nearby *Cedar Valley School* building. Besides organizing *St. Mary of Carmel* church and serving as its first priest, Father Valles also served as an associate priest at *Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church* (a wooden church then located at 2501 North Harwood, now gone. Its congregation was later merged into the nearby *Sacred Heart Cathedral*, and eventually its name became the cathedral's name). Valles also simultaneously served the pastor of *Our Lady of San Juan Teresita Catholic Church* farther west out Eagle Ford Road (now 2601 Singleton Boulevard).¹¹ By the time the new Carmelite Seminary at Chalk Hill Road was dedicated in 1950, Sebastian Valles had been transferred to Oklahoma.¹² He died at age seventy-nine.¹³

Sebastian, Father VALLES

Marylake Monastery Provincial
Cemetery
Saline County, Arkansas

November 11, 1905 - March 21, 1985
Order Discalced Carmelites

Contributed on 3/17/2013
by Eagle12953



Chain of Title: with an unusual Partnership of union members

It is remarkable that the site occupied today by *St. Mary of Carmel* seems to be exactly the same parcel lot boundary that was first sold out of the Coombes family in 1881 though ownership has passed through many hands.

- 1843: William Coombes (1803-1867) buys the original White Settler land claim of Mabel Gilbert.
- 1846: William Coombes sells his square mile claim to son Isaac Nelson Coombes (1825-1854). [Vol. A, p. 61.]
- 1854: William Coombes is granted headright deed to the chain of title. [Vol. F; p. 390; also: Vol. 155, p. 112.]
- 1866: North half of William Coombes Survey is divided to I.N. Coombes' 4 daughters. [Probate Case # 148 Notes, p.45.]
- 1879: Elfelda Ellis Coombes (1853-1879), heir of northern 100 acres, dies, leaving husband Robert J. Mills.
- 1881: Widower R. J. Mills (1849-1922) creates 5 acre site at NW corner by selling to E.J. Goodwin. [Vol.50, p. 587.]
- 1882: E.J. Goodwin sells the 5 acres to T. O'Neil. [Vol. 59, p. 13.]
- 1885: T. O'Neil sells the 5 acres to Reeves. [Vol. 68, p. 391.]
- 1886: Reeves sells a 3/5-interest in the 5 acres to Spence. [Vol. 76, p. 575.]
- 1886: Reeves and Spence sell the 5 acres to Burtle. [Vol. 87, p. 116.]
- 1893: Burtle's trustee Gaston transfers the 5 acres to McGuinnis. [Vol. 166, p. 37.]
- 1911: McGuinnis sells 5 acres to: W. Razall, J.A. Wilkinson, H. Franz, J. Frick, and H. Stocker. [Vol. 533, p.9.]
- 1914: These five investors form a Partnership to own the 5 acres. [Vol. 628; p. 188.]
- 1925: The Partnership of five investors sells the 5 acres to J. P. Burgess. [Vol. 1207, p. 131.]
- 1940: In a deed I don't understand, C.W. Burgess deeds the 5 acres to J.P. Burgess. [Vol. 2240, p. 273.]
- 1944: Dividing the 5 acres, JP Burgess sells its north end to the *St. Mary of Carmel*. [Vol. 2471, p. 258.]
- 2026: (Without noting all subsequent deeds) the 5 acres has been reunited to ownership by *St. Mary of Carmel*.

In closing I would like briefly to discuss the 1911 group of five investors who bought the five acres now occupied by *St. Mary of Carmel*. The five investors are all printing tradesmen – bookbinders and lithographers. At least some were members of a Dallas labor union, or unions, though no labor union is ever mentioned in any of their real estate deeds for these five acres.¹⁴ At least one, Walter Razall was a Socialist. He ran for county sheriff as a Socialist candidate in 1904.¹⁵ It is unclear what the group's intentions for these five acres of land might have been. Are these union member Socialists making a simple capitalist investment? Or, were they planning some sort of union hall here, a building which was never actually built? One of the five members, Hugo Robert Franz (1883-1956), a lithographer and sometime real estate agent, is a member of the Roman Catholic faith and lived nearby. The 1918 Dallas City Directory has Franz living "on the north side of Eagle Ford Road".¹⁶ In the 1928 Directory his home address is *128 Gulden*¹⁷, a site now used as a parking lot between the levee and the Trinity Groves center, along the north side of Singleton Boulevard at Beckley Avenue. Did Hugo Franz bring his four other partners to West Dallas? Did Hugo Franz help Father Sebastian Valles acquire his Partnership's former land as the site for *St. Mary of Carmel*? Though these are perhaps interesting possibilities, I have no evidence.



1908- October-6th - Dallas Morning News - page 4

It is likely that this *Cedar Valley Baptist Church* would have been the same building as *Cedar Valley School*, standing on the south side of *Eagle Ford Road* (now called: *1500 Singleton Boulevard*), a short distance from the future *St. Mary of Carmel*.

Could this "union meeting" have been the bookbinders and lithographers who bought the northwest corner's 5 acres?

(End)

FOOTNOTES:

1. *Wikipedia* (accessed on internet on 28th February 2026); two separate articles; *Carmelites* and *Discalced Carmelites*.
2. *St. Mary of Carmel School*; online at: <http://smcschool.org/alumni> (accessed on the internet during February 2026), *History*. The *History* on the website of St. Mary Carmel Church gives the founding of this Carmelite community as having been in year 1941. 1941-January-04; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 11; *Catholics Plan Start of Work on Church*, while citing upcoming ground-breaking ceremonies for its new church building, states that this congregation had "*began as a tiny mission six years ago*" (1934).
3. 1966-November-20th; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 31; *Poor Parish Gets New Church*.
4. 1957-April-5th; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 1,10; *Dallas Man Drew Cage*.
5. 1954-September-4th; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 1,3; *Parochial Schools Seen Receiving Negro Pupils*.
6. 1953-January-3rd; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 3; *People of Parish Give Thanks for Annexation*.
7. 1949-November-20th; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 10; *Getting Along toward Finish*.
8. 1947-November- 9th: *The Dallas Morning News*; page 12; *2 Catholic Church to Enlarge Facilities*.
9. Same as Note 2 above.
10. 1941-September-21st; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 4; *On Opposite Sides, Cleric's Kin Safe after Spanish War*.
11. Same as Note 7 above.
12. 1950-September-4th; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 1; *Carmelites Dedicate New Dallas Seminary*.
13. Tombstone image and inscription from: webpage *Arkansas Gravestones. Org* (accessed 5th March 2026): <http://www.arkansasgravestones.org/view/php?id=848193>; Sebastian, Father Valles.
14. Evidence that the five investors (later partners) were all in the printing industry is as follows:
 - Walter M. Razall:** *1918 Dallas City Directory* (UNT Portal to Texas History, internet March 2026), page 777 -- living at 409 ½ N. Peak, no profession cited;
 - 1909-January-9th; *The Dallas Morning News*; p. 36. Lithographers & bookbinders hold a party, Razall is on the reception committee.
 - 1911-May-13th; *The Dallas Morning News*, page 3: Bookbinders union supervised funeral, Razall is a pallbearer.
 - 1914-Nov-14th; *The Dallas Morning News*, Razall is married (2 prior wives died), H.A. Stocker is a guest.
 - FindAGrave:* Walter M. Razall (1968-1943), burial in Palo Pinto Co., Texas last wife Nora.
 - J.A. Wilkinson:** *1918 Dallas City Directory* (UNT Portal to Texas History, internet March 2026), page 948 -- J. Alex Wilkinson, superintendent of the bindery, Dorsey Co.
 - He has a brother, H.L. Wilkinson, who is secretary of Wilkinson Printing Co, where a I.A. Wilkinson was manager.
 - FindAGrave:* James Alexander Wilkinson (1876-1935), burial in Oakland Cemetery (Dallas).
 - Wilkinson is mentioned as a Game Warden, and Election Judge in the News;
 - 1922-May-26th, *The Dallas Morning News*, page 11. J.A. Wilkinson is a charter member of Dallas Historical Society.
 - Henry Stocker:** *1918 Dallas City Directory* (UNT Portal to Texas History, internet March 2026), page 870 -- Henry A. Stocker is superintendent of Dorsey Co. (lithographers and printers), lives at 519 Centre Street.
 - 1922-May-26th, *The Dallas Morning News*, page 11. H.A. Stocker is a charter member of Dallas Historical Society.
 - Hugo Franz:** *1918 Dallas City Directory* (UNT Portal to Texas History, internet March 2026), page 469 – Hugo Franz is a lithographer, residence on north side of Eagle Ford Road (West Dallas).
 - 1928 Dallas City Directory* (UNT Portal to Texas History, internet March 2026), page 948;
 - Hugo Franz, residence at 128 Gulden (WD)-- ~ 1 ½ miles east of future site of St. Mary of Carmel.
 - 1909-January-9th; *The Dallas Morning News*; p. 36. Lithographers & bookbinders hold a party, where Hugo Franz is a member of the reception committee.
 - 1956-December-6th; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 14; *Hugo R. Franz*. This obituary article reports that Franz had been a lithographer and designer who "*had worked with the Dorsey Company (printers) for 40 years*" and "*had also been in the real estate business in Dallas and was a member of the Dallas Real Estate Board, Inc.*"
 - Requiem High Mass was celebrated for Franz at Holy Trinity Catholic Church on Oak Lawn Avenue.
 - FindAGrave:* Hugo Robert Franz (1883-1956), burial in Calvary Cemetery (Dallas).
 - Justus Frick:** *1918 Dallas City Directory* (UNT Portal to Texas History, internet March 2026), page 472 – Justus Frick is listed as a "lino opr." (linotype operator).
 - 1931-October-31st; *The Dallas Morning News*; p. 3. His obituary described him as "*well known in printing circles*".
 - FindAGrave:* Justus Frick (1872-1951), burial in Restland cemetery (Dallas), wife Carrie.
15. 1904-July-17th; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 14; *Socialist Ticket* ; (where W. Razall is a candidate for sheriff).
 - 1904-August-1st; *The Dallas Morning News*; page 10; *Socialist Convention*.
16. See Note 14 above.
17. See Note 14 above.

(End of Footnotes)