

Few people in the neighborhood even knew there was a windmill back in the dense forest along the banks of the creek running down from Kidd Springs lake, in the area later subdivided into *Kessler Lake* addition.

Following, below, are copies of two newspaper accounts about the windmill, plus a map. A neighbor reported to a friend of mine (Dr. Paul Hamilton, in about year 2007) that this giant windmill had stood near Colorado Boulevard, where the "house on stilts" had been built; but the Sanborne Insurance map from 1921/1952 makes it look like the windmill was probably farther back in the property, on the site where Earl Hayes built a new house, or in what-is-now the small lake immediately east of that large Modern home.

PUMPING WATER OR NOT

Owner Won't Destroy Tall Oak Cliff Windmill

One of Dallas' landmarks, the tallest windmill in the nation, will be allowed to stand although it isn't pumping much water.

The windmill is on a 136-foot-high galvanized steel tower which sprouts out of a wooded Oak Cliff creek bed. It is on the 15-acre Cedar Acrest estate at 1123 Cedar Hill Road, now owned by Earl Hayes.

"I've got to put in an electric pump, but I'm not going to ever tear down that big windmill, if I can help it," said Hayes. "Even if it never pumps a drop of water it would make a wonderful television tower."

The Chicago manufacturers of the mill say it's the loftiest ever installed in this country, and probably the tallest in the world. The late Robert A. Gilliam, who owned Cedar Acres for many years, installed the tall mill about twenty years ago to pump water from Kidd Springs Creek to the lush gardens on the 15-acre estate. When the winds are strong, the mill is capable of pumping thousands of gallons of water daily to the bamboo groves and other exotic plants.

"Trouble is that when we need water the most in late summer, the winds usually aren't husky enough to do all the pumping," said Hayes, "so I'm going to have to put in an electric pump to augment the old windmill."

The Chicago company says the mill tower is forty-two feet higher than any other water well tower in the country. The four legs are each twenty-four feet apart and are set in eight feet of concrete. A good-sized tree grows within the tower. Tall bamboo sprout around the base. The windmill wheel, on a

6-foot square platform, is fourteen feet in diameter.

The wheel had to be set at this height to get twenty feet higher than any obstructing trees on the surrounding hillsides.

Hayes says the tower has survived many a stiff windstorm without any visible signs of weakening.

"And though it never pumps another drop of water, we won't tear down that windmill," he said.

Dallas Morning News,
29th January 1952,
page 8--

 **TOLBERT'S TEXAS**

Taking Down the Biggest Windmill

By FRANK X. TOLBERT

ONE MORNING 12 YEARS ago I went out to 1123 Cedar Hill in Oak Cliff to visit with Robert Gillam, aged 80, a tall, well-built man who usually wore an old Army campaign hat along with a khaki ensemble. Mr. Gillam lived on a 15-acre estate, grown up in exotic plants including groves of bamboo, some of these as thick of trunk as the bamboo I saw last week in the Puerto Rico Rain Forests.

On Robert Gillam's handsome property there was a windmill, said to be the tallest in the world. At the time, Mr. Gillam was using the mill to pump water out of Kidd Springs Creek for irrigation purposes.

★

WHETHER OR NOT it was the tallest windmill in the world is a question. Yet the tower soared 150 feet, capped by a 1,000-pound gearbox with a wheel 14 feet in diameter. And the William M. Pierce Co., which sold the equipment to Mr. Gillam in 1937, said this was 42 feet taller than any windmill tower they knew about. The previous champ, at least in the Southwest, seems to have been a 125-foot-high wooden tower on the Yellowhouse Ranch near Littlefield in far West Texas.

After Mr. Gillam's death, Earl Hayes acquired the Kidd Springs Creek property, and Mr. Hayes split it up into smaller estates. There was no place in the scheme of things for the world's champion windmill. Earl Hayes sold the windmill for \$35 to Frank Drinning Sr., with the provision that Mr. Drinning, a house mover, must get the gigantic steel tower off the property in 30 days. Frank Drinning then exchanged his rights in the mill to one of Dallas' leading radio "hams", George W. Crumbley, for \$80.

★

GEORGE CRUMBLEY, a postman, said he was a bit awed over the job ahead of him when he surveyed his new property. He had absolutely no experience in tearing down 150-foot-high windmills. And some engineers, working on the new luxury homes on the property, told him that it would be a colossal chore getting down that 1,000-pound gearbox.

Another problem was a 50-foot elm tree, about 3 feet in girth, growing right up out of the 24-foot-square base of the tower. One of Mr. Hayes provisions had been that no trees or plants were to be destroyed during the windmill dismantling operation.

"Mr. Hayes agreed with me, though, that the elm had to go, and I spent two days chopping it down," said George Crumbley.

★

GEORGE GETS OFF about 3 p.m. from his postman's job. He enlisted some other mailmen to help him during their spare time. "First, though, I had to find some fellows who didn't mind working on a 150-foot tower."

Mr. Crumbley rented cable and tubing, used the great tail of the windmill fan for an "A-frame". And then a 1947 station wagon, driven by his brother-in-law, G. W. Mallory, was the "power wagon" for lowering the 1,000 pounds of gearbox to the earth.

★

MR. CRUMBLEY offered to give the gearbox to a windmill company, but he was told that there was no windmill tower anywhere now which would support such a mighty gearbox.

After the gearbox was down, George Crumbley and four other off duty postmen took down the tower in several days and hauled it to the Crumbley home at 1438 Mentor in Lisbon.

Since then, George Crumbley has built a 50-foot-high tower and an 80-foot one for two of his radio ham friends. "And they work the world from these towers," he said. He also has material left over for a 65-foot tower which will soon rise from his yard on Mentor Street.

Sanborne Insurance map, Dallas, Texas, 1921-1952: Vol. 5, sheet 585E

