

May 24, 2010

**The Historic
Carrollton
Train Depot
Case
Narrative**



Figure 6- Second Carrollton Train Depot; c. 1920's- Courtesy of Paul Dafft, Carrollton – Dell Smith and Fred James clerks and unidentified third person

**City of
Carrollton**

**Historic
Preservation
Advisory
Committee**



**Carrollton, Texas
Roy Jackson Collection**

**Figure 9- The Cotton Belt Website 2009- c. unknown
Last accessed as- <http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/8199/index.html?20052>**

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The historic Carrollton train depot now sits at the southwest corner of Denton Dr. and the Cotton Belt railroad. It was moved in 2008 to accommodate the new DART rail line being built along the rail bed of the old Katy railroad line. It sits quietly as a remnant of the once active travel by rail of passengers and freight along the three adjacent railroads that traversed the nation more than 100 years ago and intersected in Carrollton.

The story of Carrollton as a city is so closely tied with the railroads, that the first map of the city filed on January 26, 1878, was filed by A.T. Obenchain, the then current agent for Depot Towns of the Dallas and Wichita Railroad Company.¹

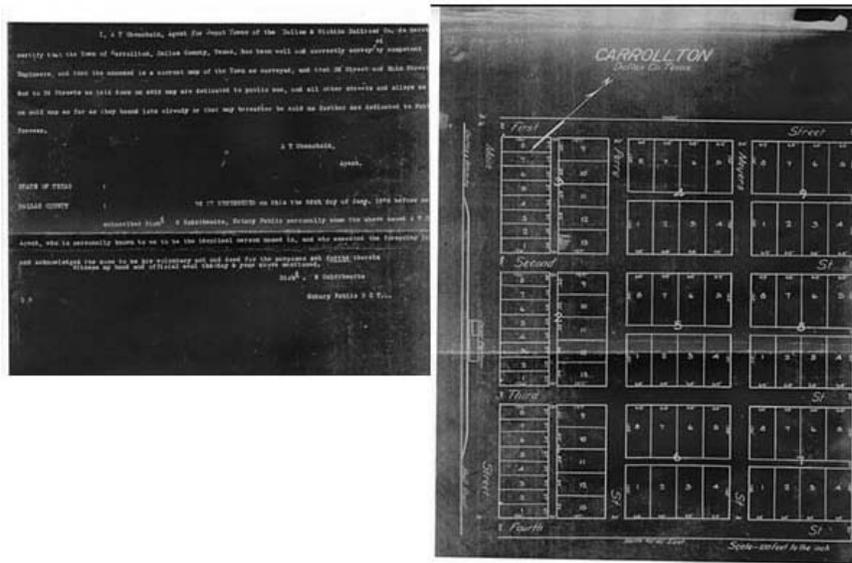


Figure 1- The First Map of Carrollton.
(OC Ref #629 & #630, Vol. 38 p. 380)

Work on the Dallas and Wichita Railroad began in 1878 and the segment to Denton was finished in 1880 by the Texas and Pacific Railroad who had purchased them. In 1881, the Texas and Pacific merged with the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad and was given the nickname of 'the Katy'.² The first train platform, from where both passengers and freight were loaded onto the train, is clearly shown on the first city map. It was located just east of the Foxworth-Galbraith Lumber Co. (currently known as **Babe's Restaurant**) on 3rd Avenue and Denton Dr. This railroad ran primarily in the North-South direction through Carrollton.

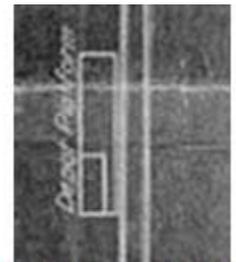


Figure 2- Train Platform

¹ **Elm Fork Settlement**; pg. 134; map on pgs. 88-89 & OC; Ref #630

² **Carrollton 1840-1940**; Joyce Duncan Garrison; Pg. 6; **Handbook of Texas On-line**; Texas State Historical Association & **Significance of Railroads in Texas**; Kelley B. Poydence, 1991

Seven years later in 1888, the St. Louis-Arkansas & Texas Railway came through Carrollton. In 1891, it went into receivership and emerged as the St. Louis Southwestern Railroad on June 1, 1891.³ Due to its service of transporting cotton across the country, this railroad became popularly known as ‘the Cotton Belt’.⁴ At one time, the Cotton Belt provided a majority of the local taxes in Carrollton. The railroad purchased large tracts of land in Carrollton as well as in Addison and North Dallas, then later sold them in order to bring industry and increased freight to the cities along its lines.⁵ This railroad ran primarily in the East-West direction through Carrollton.



INTERLOCKING TOWER PROGRAM, PRT. An interlocking tower or switching tower was constructed near the depot. The lower portion housed the control apparatus for the rail head signals and switches. The upper story of the tower provided better visibility of the tracks and incoming and outgoing trains for the operator. © Courtesy of Ed Williams?

Figure 3- Historical photo of the tower. (SRRC; pg 110)

With the coming of a second railroad that crossed the first, came the need for a way to monitor and control the trains in order to prevent a collision. This resulted in the first interlocking tower that was built in the 1870’s as a joint project of ‘the Katy’ and ‘the Cotton Belt’. The tower was 2-stories high⁶ and contained switches for a light system that signaled the trains to stop or go. It was located on the north side of ‘the Cotton Belt’ and east side of ‘the Katy’ and Broadway St.⁷

On March 9th, 1900 the first recorded passenger depot in Carrollton was mentioned in an article in the Dallas Morning News. They note that *“the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad and the St. Louis Southwestern Railroad Companies have put in a union depot”* in Carrollton *“which was greatly appreciated by the traveling public and our community generally”*.⁸ This was the first of three depots constructed in Carrollton at different times.

Prior to the first depot, passengers would wait for the train outdoors at the original Train Platform along with the freight being shipped. Nearby, at the northwest corner of Denton Drive and 2nd Avenue, were stock pens and additional loading platforms for freight.⁹ James Noel, whose father was a Section Foreman for the Katy Railroad from 1909-1941, remembered the stock pens east of Denton Drive for loading and unloading the cattle to give them food and water. He also described another section east of Denton Drive that loaded and unloaded automobiles from the trains. The cattle,

³ **Significance of Railroads in Texas**; Kelley B. Poydence, 1991

⁴ **Carrollton Depot** – History; Marcel Quimby Architecture Preservation Inc.; November 20, 2006; pg.1

⁵ **Significance of Railroads in Texas**; Kelley B. Poydence, 1991

⁶ **Carrollton Depot**; pg2- interview with **Paul Dafft & Sara Salmon**- June 2006

⁷ Personal interview with **Ray Clark**

⁸ **Dallas Morning News**; March 9,1900; pg 7

⁹ **Carrollton Depot** – History; Marcel Quimby Architecture Preservation Inc.; November 20, 2006; pg 2

cotton and other goods were transported on ‘the Cotton Belt’ and ‘the Frisco’. The automobiles and other goods were transported on ‘the Katy’. James remembers the train schedules being kept on a chalkboard in the train depot.¹⁰

The St. Louis, San Francisco and Texas Railroad came to Carrollton on March 23, 1902.¹¹ The *“new railroad was located at the existing 2-way intersection of the other railroads, but was later moved slightly to the north to accommodate the Main Street/Broadway intersection”*.¹² This road became known as ‘the Frisco’ which was short for San Francisco.

With the addition of ‘the Frisco’, the depot now serviced three railroads, Wells Fargo Express Company, United States Express Company and the American Express Company.¹³ A current map of Carrollton, in figure 4, contains annotations to show the location of the three railroads, the tower, the depot and the original train platform.

¹⁰ Personal Interview with **James Noel**, 1701 Francis St., Carrollton, TX 75006; March 28, 2009

¹¹ **Early History of Carrollton, An Outline 1836-1920** – David E. Box Jr.; 1987

¹² **Carrollton Depot- History**; Marcel Quimby Architecture Preservation Inc.; November 20, 2006; pg 1- interview with Paul Dafft, 2006

¹³ **Carrollton Chronicle Newspaper**; October 7, 1904

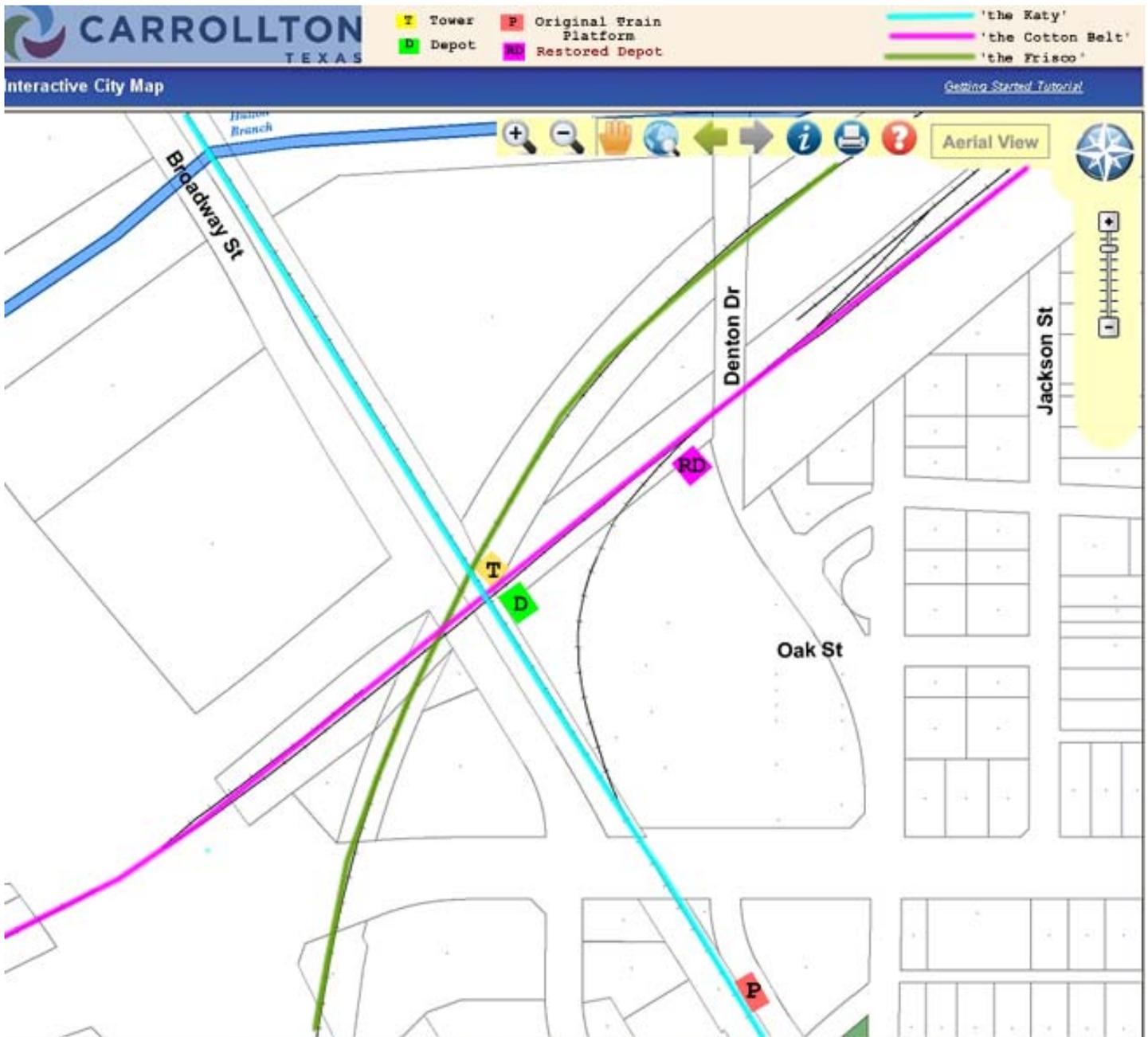


Figure 4- (City of Carrollton Website with Highlights by Julie Hall
<http://www.cityofcarrollton.com/index.aspx?page=520>)

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¹⁴ City of Carrollton Website- interactive map; <http://www.cityofcarrollton.com/index.aspx?page=520>

Reports referencing a new 'Union Depot' in August of 1905 show several railroad officials meeting in Carrollton "relative to a new union depot".¹⁵ Two years later, an article in the Dallas Morning News says a "Union Depot was to be built by order of the Railroad Commission". The suggestion is made that all of the building materials are currently on site.¹⁶ This new depot is to be built at the south-east corner of the Carrollton Crossing in the same location as the present day



Figure 5- Second Carrollton Train Depot; c.1910, Courtesy of Paul Dafft

depot's original location. This depot is an L-shaped building with two separate waiting rooms and freight rooms alongside each railroad. Marcel Quimby describes the architecture of this union depot as including "Victorian ornamentation such as small gable roofs at the corner office, 6/6 windows, a gently sloping roof with dramatic overhang' and 'clad in novelty wood siding". There were brick flues in both waiting rooms to accommodate stoves for heating.¹⁷ This is the second of the three depots constructed in Carrollton.

James Noel has a vivid recollection of the depot as containing two passenger stations, one for the 'white' and

one for the 'colored' passengers. The 'whites' entered via the West door into the West-side of the Depot that was adjacent to 'the Cotton Belt'. The 'coloreds' entered via the North door to the East-side of the Depot that was adjacent to 'the Katy'. The restrooms consisted of two outhouses, one for 'whites' and the other for 'coloreds'. He remembers the railroad as being a vital part of the community. His family lived in one of the section houses near the train depot.¹⁸ It was a 2-story section house located beside 'the Katy' tracks at Broadway and Donald.¹⁹ Mr. Noel said that most of

¹⁵ Dallas Morning News- 8/2/1905; pg 4

¹⁶ Dallas Morning News- 6/3/1907; pg 3

¹⁷ Carrollton Depot - History; Marcel Quimby Architecture Preservation Inc.; November 20, 2006; pg 2

¹⁸ Personal Interview with James Noel, 1701 Francis St., Carrollton, TX 75006; March 28, 2009

¹⁹ Railroad Section Crews in Carrollton; Ray Ogle; Elm Fork Echoes; 1977

Belt Line Rd. and the downtown area housed the railroad employees and their families. The depot kept Carrollton on the map because of the number of employees that lived here.²⁰ There were two other groups of section houses located in historic Carrollton. 'The Cotton Belt' had 3 section houses located east of Denton Drive and south of 'the Cotton Belt' tracks, while 'the Frisco' had a section house on the north side of their tracks near Clint street.²¹

The early 1900's was the height of train travel. During this period there were approximately 12 passenger train stops per day in Carrollton. Each of the three railroads had two trains per day that made two stops each during their route.²²

The Carrollton Chronicle contained numerous advertisements for riding on the train. One such ad on December 7, 1917 says "Fine Trains! Fine tracks! When it comes to traveling comfort there are no half measures about the service via 'the Katy' ".²³ An article describes the great demand for telegraph operators on the railroad. The largest telegraph school in America was located at Tyler Commercial College of Tyler, Texas. Apparently they were having difficulty keeping up with the demands of the railroads.²⁴



Figure 6- Second Carrollton Train Depot; c. 1920's- Courtesy of Paul Dafft, Carrollton – Dell Smith and Fred James clerks and unidentified third person

²⁰ Personal Interview with **James Noel**, 1701 Francis St., Carrollton, TX 75006; March 28,2009

²¹ **Railroad Section Crews in Carrollton**; Ray Ogle; Elm Fork Echoes; November 1977.

²² **Carrollton Depot – History**; Marcel Quimby Architecture Preservation Inc.; November 20, 2006; **CC-** Carrollton Chronicle Newspaper ; August 23, 1935

²³ **Carrollton Chronicle Newspaper**; 12/7/1917

²⁴ **Carrollton Chronicle Newspaper**; 3/23/1917

This Depot and the adjacent interlocking tower were both destroyed by fire on Sunday, July 28, 1923.²⁵ Pictures of the depot are shown in Figures 5, 6 & 7. Several world events occurred during this time that would eventually change the face of train travel forever. World War I broke out in 1914 the same year that Henry Ford began mass production of cars by assembly line. After World War I was the Great Depression in 1929-1933, followed by the Recession in 1937-1938 and World War II in 1939-1945.²⁶



Figure 7- Interior of the Second Depot c. 1908
Courtesy of Paul Dafft - William Dell Smith -clerk Harry ? - agent

Workers began construction on the third and final train depot in Carrollton on May 2, 1924. The crew of workers consisted of 'six men'. They arrived by train and stayed until the depot was finished. The building was located in the same place as the previous one. It was said to "have the same style as the old one... but it will not have as much floor

²⁵ Carrollton Chronicle Newspaper; 5/2/1924

²⁶ Wikipedia- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II

sawdust and cleaned with kerosene.²⁹ Like the previous union depot, this station was a joint agency between 'the Cotton Belt' and 'the Katy' railroads.³⁰ A picture of the third Depot is shown in figure 9. The exterior was painted in a two-tone green as were all of 'the Katy' depots in the 1920's. Interestingly, if the depots needed repainting after Matthew S. Sloan became president in 1934, they were painted a bright yellow with black trim in his honor.³¹ Apparently bright yellow was his favorite color and the color of his chauffeur-driven 1936 Chrysler Airflow sedan.³² The two-tone green as the original color was confirmed by the preservation architect hired by DART to aid in the historic restoration of the depot. Her analysis of paint removed from covered and inconspicuous areas of the depot yielded colors most closely matched to Sherwin Williams 6444 (light green) for the exterior body color and Sherwin Williams 6475 (dark green) for the exterior trim.³³

²⁹ **Carrollton Depot** – History; Marcel Quimby Architecture Preservation Inc.; November 20, 2006; pg.4

³⁰ **ibid**

³¹ **Katy Power, Locomotives and Trains of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad 1912-1985**; Joe G. Collias & Raymond B. George, Jr.; 1986; pg.265

³² **Missouri-Kansas-Texas Lines in Color**; Raymond B. George, Jr.; 1994; pg.5

³³ **Marcel Quimby**- Memorandum regarding the Carrollton Depot, NW Line Exterior Paint Colors, Email to Steve Bourn with DART; 3/26/2010



Figure 9- The Cotton Belt Website 2009- c. unknown
Last accessed as- <http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/8199/index.html?20052>

Later that same year, 'the Katy' tracks were electrified and the Texas Interurban Railway opened a Dallas to Denton line.³⁴ On October 1, 1924, the Interurban began passenger service to Carrollton, Farmers Branch, Lewisville and Garza.³⁵ The fare from Carrollton to Trinity Mills or Farmers Branch was 11 cents.³⁶ Mr. Noel remembers riding on the Interurban to Denton for fun as a kid. The families of the railroad employees received free passes to ride the railroad.³⁷

The Great Depression in the US took place between 1929 and 1933. During that time period, the Interurban Line was abandoned.³⁸ Whether that was due to the depression or due to the mass production of vehicles which had begun in 1914, is anyone's guess.³⁹ It is interesting that a century later, the public is once again embracing the travel by rail for

³⁴ **Elm Fork Settlement-** Farmers Branch and Carrollton; Georgia Myers Ogle; 1996; pgs. 156-157

³⁵ **Carrollton Chronicle Newspaper;** Sept 12, 1924

³⁶ **Carrollton 1840-1940;** Joyce Duncan Garrison; Pg. 6; **HT-** Handbook of Texas On-line.; Texas State Historical Association; pg.6

³⁷ Personal Interview with **James Noel**, 1701 Francis St., Carrollton, TX 75006; March 28,2009; March 28,2009

³⁸ **Significance of Railroads in Texas ;** Kelley B. Poydence, 1991; p.3

³⁹ **Wikipedia-** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Ford ; Automobile History

transportation in and around the DFW Metro area with the DART Rail line that is due to open in Carrollton by December 2010.

On August 17, 1935, the last passenger train was served by the Carrollton depot, which was a train from Addison to Ft. Worth on 'the Cotton Belt'. Apparently 'the Katy' railroad still had "mixed trains" which were described as freight trains that also allowed passengers to ride, but in freight cars not in passenger cars. The golden age of railroad travel, when up to 12 trains a day served the Carrollton depot, had passed.⁴⁰ Later that year, the transfer track at the southeast quadrant of the Carrollton Crossing, was added.⁴¹ This track allowed 'the Cotton Belt' to unload freight to the Carrollton Lumber Company. The historic depot was moved in 2008 to Denton Dr. just across from 'the Cotton Belt' train yard to accommodate the DART rail line being built along 'the old Katy' rail bed.⁴²

In 1947, Ray Clark began working at the Carrollton Depot. He currently lives in Richardson and was very helpful in writing this report. One of his co-workers was Paul Dafft, a longtime Carrollton resident. They both worked as telegraph operators in the tower that was on 'the Frisco' side of 'the Frisco' and 'the Katy' railroads. During that time, R.O. Connell was the agent in charge of the depot. An agent and 3 operators manned the depot 24-hrs a day. The agent worked inside the depot five days a week from 8am-5pm. He handled all of the business for the three railroads. The operators worked 3 shifts of 8 hours each inside the tower. They were responsible for doing manual switching of the trains and passing messages to the train conductors via a 'Y'-shaped pole called a 'paddle'. They also sent incoming telegrams to the Western Union station in Dallas.⁴³

A 25' tall pole called a semaphore pole was attached to the depot outside of the office area. (It is also noted on Marcel Quimby's drawing as well as the picture from the Roy Jackson collection shown in Figure 9.)⁴⁴ It was used to signal to the trains that they had a message to pick up. The operator inside the tower would pull a lever that made the semaphore pole change to red to indicate a stop for a message. Another signal was operated from inside the tower to give the trains a green signal for passage through the interlocking tracks. The signal was red by default.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ **Carrollton Chronicle Newspaper-** 'No Passenger Trains for Carrollton Now'; August 23, 1935)&(C1840; pg 6

⁴¹ **Carrollton Depot** – History; Marcel Quimby Architecture Preservation Inc.; November 20, 2006;pg. 2- from interview with Paul Dafft and Sarah Salmon- June 2006

⁴² **Google Maps;** <http://maps.google.com>, Aerial view of new location for train depot; April 5,2010

⁴³ Personal interviews with **Ray Clark**; 2009-2010

⁴⁴ **The Cotton Belt Website-** 2009; Last accessed as- <http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/8199/index.html?20052>

⁴⁵ Personal interviews with **Ray Clark**; 2009-2010



**Figure 10- Paul Dafft-
Private Collection - c. 1950**

telegraph operators and interlockers. They received and transmitted the messages for the trains and operated the locks that signaled the trains to stop and go. A picture of Paul outside the depot office is shown in figure 10. All of the employees that worked in the Depot worked for 'the Cotton Belt'.⁴⁷

The train dispatchers sent train orders from Tyler for 'the Cotton Belt', Tulsa for 'the Frisco' and Dennison for 'the Katy'. Those orders were sent to the tower where the telegraph operator pulled the levers on the semaphore pole and the right of way pole to communicate with the trains. At this time, the depot was painted a bright yellow with a darker colored trim on the outside.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ ibid

⁴⁷ ibid

⁴⁸ Personal interviews with **Ray Clark**; 2009-2010

The operation of delivering a message to the train was very interesting. If the train had a message, copies of the message were placed on the 'Y'-shaped pole and handed up to the conductor as the train was moving. The 'Y'-shaped pole had 2 slots, one for the engine compartment and one for the caboose. Two copies of the message were delivered at both locations. The conductor would put his arm through the slot and the messages came off along with the string that was tied to them.⁴⁶

The depot at this time used one waiting room, the one that bordered 'the Cotton Belt', for the passengers. The other waiting room, the one that bordered 'the Katy', was used for storage. Paul Dafft and Ray Clark were



**Figure 11- Ray Clark 2009- the
Depot before restoration**

Mr. Clark had worked first in Addison for the train service immediately after finishing high school. Initially, he delivered mail on the railroads. He later trained to become a telegraph operator and was moved to Carrollton in 1947 to work in their tower. He and Paul both worked as operators. They were also both members of the ORT, or the Order of Railroad Telegraphers.⁴⁹

During Mr. Clark's employment, there was no passenger service in Carrollton; 'the Katy' didn't have much business and 'the Cotton Belt' didn't stop in Carrollton. Blanton Grain shipped their goods on 'the Katy' and Inca Metals shipped their goods on 'the Frisco'.

According to Mr. Clark, Marcel Quimby's drawing of the depot's floor plan is accurate. He describes the tower as having about 28 to 30 levers inside. The route of the trains as specified in the train orders determined the levers that needed to be pulled for that train. A board printed on the wall outlined the levers that were pulled for each scenario. During his employment he witnessed the change from the steam engine to diesel. For a period of time both type of engines ran until the steam locomotives were phased out sometime around 1955. In 1959, Mr. Clark quit working for the depot.⁵⁰



Figure 12- G.V. Hander, Clerk Telegrapher, c. 1971

An article dated April 12, 1959 that was printed in the Dallas Morning News, reports that 'the Cotton Belt' had announced it would install blinking lights at the Denton Drive crossing "as soon as the equipment now on order is received". This ended the campaign by the city council and other civic organizations to install blinking lights on all roads that were crossed by trains.⁵¹ Cars and trains were now competing for the same roadways.

During the 1970's there were several changes made to the depot. The interior walls were removed (except for the wall to 'the Katy' freight room), the bathrooms were enlarged and a shower was created just east of them. Additionally, an interior office was built using plywood in a part of the former 'colored' and 'white' waiting rooms. A photograph made during this time is pictured in figure 12.

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ *ibid*

⁵¹ Dallas Morning News Paper; April 12, 1959

Additionally, the care and upkeep of the depot was beginning to wane. According to Marcel Quimby's report "the exterior wood of the depot had not been maintained on a regular basis and a large amount of the historic paint had peeled off".⁵²

Currently the only operating line in Carrollton is 'the Frisco' which is owned by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad. The historic depot has been moved one block east to its permanent location at Denton Dr. and 'the Cotton Belt'. It was moved in 2008 to make way for the new DART commuter line from Carrollton to Denton slated to open in December of 2010.

Pictures taken during the restoration of the depot to its historic appearance are shown in figures 13, 14, 15 & 16. Once again, there will be passenger traffic on the rails beginning in December 2010 when DART rail opens the commuter train from Carrollton to Lewisville and then Denton in 2011.



Figure 13- Exterior of Depot prior to restoration- c. 2009

⁵² Marcel Quimby- Memorandum regarding the Carrollton Depot, NW Line Exterior Paint Colors, Email to Steve Bourn with DART; 3/26/2010



Figure 14- Exterior during restoration-
Marcel Quimby & Steve Bourn c. 2010



Figure 15- Historic cabinet in west
freight room - c.2010



Figure 16- Interior Photo of train office during restoration- c.2010