

PONDER

DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

Historical Narrative researched and written by Sheri N. Clearman for Texas Historical Commission THC  
Subject Marker Application. Denton County. 2011

*Revised May 1, 2012*

## **PONDER, DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS**

### **I. CONTEXT**

The town of Ponder is located in North Central Texas in Denton County at the intersection of Farm to Market Road 156 and Farm to Market Road 2449. It was established in 1886 as the town of Gerald on land that had been originally purchased by the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway out of the Nathaniel Rudder Survey.<sup>1</sup> Because another town in Texas was named Gerald, the U.S. Post Office required that the name be changed, and it was renamed Ponder. It was incorporated on January 28, 1966.<sup>2</sup> Population of the town at the time of incorporation was around 208.<sup>3</sup> The first mayor was Troye Webster and the first two commissioners were John Taylor and Don Swafford.<sup>4</sup>

At the time it was platted as Gerald, it consisted of twenty blocks with ten blocks on each side of the railroad track. The orientation of the town is north to south along Farm to Market Road 156 and then parallel to the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway tracks. The east side of the town contained the depot, cotton gin, and rodeo arena. The west side of the town contained the businesses, residences, churches, and the school. The town of Ponder

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<sup>1</sup> Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 31, pp. 426-427.

<sup>2</sup> Town of Ponder Minute Book Number 1, March 7, 1966, pp. 1 – 21.

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of the Census. “1970 Census of Population,” 13 September 2010. <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/26084397v1ch4.pdf>, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Town of Ponder Minute Book Number 1, March 10, 1966, p.22.

encompasses the original commercial and residential properties that served the community, business owners, area ranchers, and farmers. It is also representative of small town commercial and residential growth in North Central Texas.

## II. OVERVIEW

### Early History of the Ponder Area

The Texian Land and Immigration Company, otherwise known as the Peters Colony, received a land grant from the Texas Congress in 1841 for all of future Denton County.<sup>5</sup> In 1854, settlers began arriving to the area. Many built homes along Denton Creek to the west of present day Ponder. The Denton Creek Settlement began at present day Stony and extended south along the creek. It included the present day towns of Stony and Ponder. The settlement snaked along the creek and offered little protection from bands of Native Americans that would raid the settlers.<sup>6</sup>

In 1855, Silas Christal (January 10, 1810 – June 30, 1883) and his wife, Mary Elizabeth (Burnett) Christal (February 26, 1811 – July 16, 1883)<sup>7</sup> arrived from Macon County, Missouri, with their twelve children. They purchased a cabin from Robert Vaughan and settled along the banks of Denton Creek, west of the future site of Ponder (the cabin has been restored and moved to property two miles away by Bill Marquis)<sup>8</sup> Silas Christal built

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<sup>5</sup> Odom, E. Dale, 'Denton County', *The Handbook of Texas Online*, viewed August 2010  
<<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/DD/hcd6.html> >

<sup>6</sup> Bates, Edmund Franklin, *History and Reminiscences of Denton County*, (McNitzky Printing, Denton, Texas, 1918).

<sup>7</sup> Rodgers, Nancy Cleere, "Descendants of John Burnett," 10 September, 2010.  
<http://webspaces.webring.com/people/xc/consur140/BurnDesc.html> viewed September 10, 2010

<sup>8</sup> Vaughan-Christal Cabin, viewed October 8, 2010. <http://allbound4tx.com/ChrisCabin.htm>

an ox driven mill to grind corn. As the population in the area grew, a school was built on the Christal property.<sup>9</sup>

In 1886, W. S. Herndon sold land to the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway in two separate land purchases. The first land purchase was used for the railroad right-of-way and the second purchase of one-hundred acres was partially used for the town of Gerald.<sup>10</sup> Large portions of the land owned by the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway were sold to two individuals. In 1888, J. W. Jagoe of Denton County purchased blocks three and four and the land connecting those blocks on the northwest end of the town site.<sup>11</sup> Mr. Jagoe was a previous mayor of Denton and served in the Texas State Legislature from 1889 to 1891 as a representative of the 29<sup>th</sup> District. In 1894, Frederick J. Miller of New York County, New York, purchased many of the remaining unsold lots in the town of Gerald and many lots in the neighboring town of Krum.<sup>12</sup> Engineer Thomas King surveyed the town in 1903 and a town map was certified in December 1905 by the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway President E. P. Ripley. The plat for the “town of Gerald in the county of Denton” was filed for record on November 24, 1905.<sup>13</sup> The name was changed to Ponder because another post office in Texas had the

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<sup>9</sup> Rodgers, Nancy Cleere, “The Christals of VA, KY, MO & TX,” *The Christal Surname Research Center*, August 2010, <<http://webspaces.webring.com/people/xc/consur140/Christals.html>>

<sup>10</sup> Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 31, p. 429; Vol. 31, pp. 426-427.

<sup>11</sup> Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 40, p. 617.

<sup>12</sup> Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 54, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 75, p. 80.

same name in 1893. The town was named for prominent landowner William A. Ponder (August 12, 1848 – March 8, 1911).<sup>14</sup>

### **Geography and Agriculture of Ponder and Western Denton County**

Ponder lies in the Grand Prairie geographical belt. There is a deep clay subsoil with tough, interwoven root systems of prairie grass. When the area was first settled, technology did not yet exist for the proper tillage of this type of soil. After the Civil War, tractors and heavy steel plows allowed the area to become a productive agriculture area.

The Denton Creek system provided the area with water and an ample supply of fish for settlers. This creek drains north and west and flows into Grapevine Lake. There are numerous springs as well.

The growing season averages 225 days a year, and except for the likelihood of drought in late summer, is compatible with most grains and other standard crops.<sup>15</sup> The Grand Prairie was ideal for wheat. Between 1880 and 1900, wheat acreage increased by more than 80,000 acres. In 1881, H.F. Wakefield purchased land west of the town site and became the first to raise corn, oats, cotton, and wheat. From 1890 to 1920 the county ranked either first or second in wheat production among the counties of the state.<sup>16</sup> Grain was sold at the grain elevator owned by J.N. Razor and usually shipped by train to larger cities.<sup>17</sup> Several cotton gins were in town. The first two were owned

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<sup>14</sup> Seals, Nita, *Ponder the Little Town with the Big Rodeo*, (Gainesville, TX: Gainesville Printing Company, 1985. Gainesville, TX), p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> Lowry, Dr. Bullitt, *Geography on Denton County*, "Smallholder County: A History of Denton County to 1850," 17 August, 2010, <http://mikecochran.net/LowryContents.html>.

<sup>16</sup>Odom, E. Dale, 'Denton County', *The Handbook of Texas Online*,, viewed August 2010 <<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/DD/hcd6.html> >

<sup>17</sup> Seals, page 31

by Mr. Huffines and George Harshaw. Later, Marvin Swafford and Bob Cope built a gin called the Swafford-Cope Gin Company. Mr. Swafford invented an implement to help harvest grain with a binder without the use of horses or an independent tractor.<sup>18</sup>

Between 1880 and 1920 the number of beef cattle declined from 49,008 to 12,123, and 89 percent of county land was in cultivation at the latter date.<sup>19</sup>

The area that is now included in the Deussendale Ranch west of the town of Ponder was first settled in 1859 by Captain Jeremiah Amos Burnett (born May 15, 1823, died February 24, 1904) and Nancy (Turner) Burnett (born May 24, 1829, died November 14, 1869). The Burnetts, who were from Missouri, were lured to the Denton Creek area by the fact that you could raise a cow on two acres of lush grassland, the supply of water, and the beautiful oak trees. Cattle from the ranch and others in the area were driven up the Chisholm Trail to Kansas.

The Burnett's son, Samuel Burk Burnett, who would become one of the most well known ranchers in Texas, moved with his parents to the Ponder area when he was ten years old. He learned about cattle from his father who had become involved in the cattle business. In 1870, at the age of 19, he purchased 100 head of cattle with the 6666 brand and in 1874 he established the Four Sixes (6666) Ranch where Wichita Falls is located today.<sup>20</sup> Jeremiah and Nancy Burnett are buried at the Sams-Burnett-Mennerly Cemetery between

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<sup>18</sup> Craddock, F. J., "Uses Auto Engine to Run Harvest Machine," *The Dallas Morning News*, June 16, 1917.

<sup>19</sup> Odom, August 2010

<sup>20</sup> Four Sixes Ranch, Burnett Family, viewed October 11, 2010, <http://www.6666ranch.com/thestory/burnett-family.html>

Ponder and the community of Drop. The cemetery has a Historic Texas Cemetery designation. Their granddaughter Sue Campbell married Alexander Deussen. Mr. Deussen was a well known petroleum geologist. He was a professor at the University of Texas and an assistant geologist in the United States Geological Survey from 1907 to 1915.<sup>21</sup> The Deussen's purchased land near Ponder to combine with the land Mrs. Deussen had inherited from the Burnett estate to form the 1,300 acre Deussendale Ranch.

### **Growth and Development of Ponder**

The first settlers to the Ponder area began arriving in 1854. Education was very important to these pioneers and the first school was built in 1857 on Oliver Creek near the present day community of Drop. Silas Christal built a school on his property in 1880. The Christal School Number 39 was in operation until it incorporated with the Ponder Independent School District in 1930.<sup>22</sup> The building now has a prominent place in the Eddie Deussen Jr. Memorial Park located at 115 West James Street in Ponder. The Shady Grove School was built in 1888 about three miles south of town. This building was also used by all of the congregations of the area churches (Baptist, Methodist, and Church of Christ) on a rotating basis. The building was moved numerous times with the students and congregations following it to its new location each time. Trustees of the Common School District Number 85, H.F. Wakefield, C.A. Cox, and E.F. Proffer, purchased Lot 3 of Block 5 from the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway in 1911 to build a school within the town of

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<sup>21</sup> Ercums, Kris. 'Alexander Deussen'. *The Handbook of Texas Online*, viewed October 7, 2010. <http://207.200.58.4/handbook/online/articles/DD/fde67.html>

<sup>22</sup> [http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph15500/m1/72/?q=38th legislature 1923.](http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph15500/m1/72/?q=38th%20legislature%201923)

Ponder (formerly Gerald).<sup>23</sup> The Ponder Independent School district was formed by the 38<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature by House Bill 57 in 1923.<sup>24</sup> A two-story building was constructed on a land grant from the Wakefield estate. (See addendum following Documentation section) Fire started by lightning destroyed this school.<sup>25</sup> All records concerning the early years of the Ponder Independent School District were lost in the fire. Several students attending the smaller schools in the outlying areas wanted to attend Ponder High School. Town's people such as the Paul Thomas family would allow the children to live with them during the school year.<sup>26</sup>

Traditions started early in Ponder. Beginning in the late 1800s the townspeople would place a large Christmas tree on the main street. Citizens would gather to sing carols and socialize.<sup>27</sup> The town still has large Christmas and Easter celebrations that bring the citizens as well people that have moved away back to town to celebrate.

The town also comes together to watch basketball and rodeos. The Ponder school tradition of winning basketball teams started in the 1940s. Everyone would come out to watch the boys play the nearby towns of Stony, Krum, Plainview, and Allison even if they did not have a child or grandchild playing.<sup>28</sup> The tradition continued and the boy's basketball team still draws a large crowd. When the team plays out of town, Ponder almost becomes a

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<sup>23</sup> Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 200. p.58.

<sup>24</sup> [lib.utexas.edu/taro/tslac/30019/tsl-30019.html#series1](http://lib.utexas.edu/taro/tslac/30019/tsl-30019.html#series1)

<sup>25</sup> Denton County, Ponder and Stony Town Summaries, Denton County Courthouse.

<sup>26</sup> Seals, Nita, pp. 21-23.

<sup>27</sup> Seals, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, O. D., *Memories of Stony*, (Self Published), 1996, p. 97.

ghost town. The boys' team has won state championships three years in a row since 2008.<sup>29</sup>

The railroad played a significant part in the growth of the town. The Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Railway was one of the largest and most profitable railroads in the Southwest. The company wanted a line that would link Kansas with the Pacific Ocean and with the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>30</sup> In 1886, the Santa Fe Railway purchased land for a railway from Fort Worth, Texas, to Purcell, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). Part of this purchase created the new town of Gerald. The next year, the first passenger train pulled into town. The Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe railway had built a depot on the west side of the railroad tracks between James and Bailey Streets. Santa Fe agents in Ponder included M. Shields, Ed Steagall, Frank Reeves, and M. Teal.<sup>31</sup>

In an effort to secure a post office for the town, it was discovered that another town in Texas already had the name of Gerald. The town changed its name to Ponder in honor of W.A. Ponder. He owned a large amount of land in the area and served on the local board of education. Mr. Ponder was a member of a group of men in Denton called "the Syndicate" who helped to establish the Texas Normal College. Later he was appointed by the state to the board for the North Texas Normal College (now the University of North

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<sup>29</sup> Ponder ISD 'PHS Boys Basketball', viewed August 2010, <<http://www.ponderisd.net/101420115131339550/site/default.asp>>.

<sup>30</sup> Bryant, Keith L Jr., 'Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway System,' *The Handbook of Texas Online*, viewed August 2010, <<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/AA/eqa10.html>>

<sup>31</sup> Seals, p .7-8.

Texas) and helped to establish the College of Industrial Arts (Texas Woman's University) in Denton.<sup>32</sup>

Postal records listing Denton County postmasters show that the name change from Gerald to Ponder occurred in either 1893 or 1894, when the first post office was established as Ponder. The 1905 filing date of the Town of Gerald plat puts this earlier date in question. The first post office opened in 1893 and Jesse H. McWhorter was the first postmaster. The post office operated from June 17, 1893, until it was discontinued on February 6, 1894, and the mail was routed through the post office in Justin, Texas.<sup>33</sup> On May 11, 1894, Cornelius N. (C. N.) Skaggs (b. October 8, 1869, d. September 26, 1938) opened a fourteen-by- twenty foot store and post office combination and became the second postmaster. He later served as a stock holder and the vice-president for the Ponder State Bank.<sup>34</sup> The roster for rural mail service in 1915 consisted of over 100 names. From 1917 until today, the post office has moved five times. However, all these locations were within 500 feet of the important railroad.<sup>35</sup>

The Shady Grove School Building served as home to the town's three churches from 1888 until 1893. The Baptist Church was organized in 1893 and joined the Denton Baptist Association in 1896. Two years later the congregation moved to the town site. In 1903, the first wooden sanctuary was

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<sup>32</sup> Seals, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> "Postmasters of Denton County", viewed October 7, 2010.  
<http://rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txpost/denton.html>

<sup>34</sup> Denton County, Ponder and Stony Town Summaries, Denton County Courthouse.

<sup>35</sup> Seals, pp. 16-18.

built on Shaffner Street<sup>36</sup>. Additions were added in 1945 and 1975. This building is currently the Vivian Cockburn Municipal Building. The Methodist Church was formed and a church was built at the corner of James Street and Shaffner Street on land purchased in 1899<sup>37</sup>. It was replaced in the late 1930s. The congregation stayed in the same location until the summer of 2010. The Church of Christ was formed in 1923. The congregation met in a tent until a building was completed in 1926 at the corner of Shaffner Street and Green Street. They are the only congregation that still meets in their original location.<sup>38</sup>

The first business to open in Ponder was Mr. Skaggs' grocery store. Four years later in 1897, the second business, a blacksmith shop operated by O.H. Shephard, was opened. The town accumulated the usual businesses. There were several general stores, a lumber yard owned by Bud Dale, a cotton gin owned by W. O. Meyers, a mill, a grain elevator owned by J. N. Razor, doctors, a bank, and even a hotel. The town relied upon the train and several dray services to get goods to and from the cities of Fort Worth and Denton.<sup>39</sup>

Construction of the Ponder State Bank building began in 1908. It was licensed by the State of Texas on May 11, 1910.<sup>40</sup> The stockholders included H.T. Wakefield, C.N. Skaggs, Joe Seaborn, George Owens, and George Harshaw. In July 1920, burglars broke into the bank, but no attempt was

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<sup>36</sup> Denton County Plat Dept., Public Works Dept., Ownership Records, First Baptist Church.

<sup>37</sup> Denton County Plat Dept., Public Works Dept., Ownership Records, Methodist Church.

<sup>38</sup> Seals, pp. 27-28.

<sup>39</sup> Seals, pp. 30-36.

<sup>40</sup> "New State Banks Licensed." *Dallas Morning News*, May 12, 1910.

made to break into the vault and nothing was missing.<sup>41</sup> Second attempt to break into the bank was made in April, 1925. This time the burglars used an acetylene torch to cut a hole into the vault. This scorched and burned the ends of the money, but no money was completely destroyed.<sup>42</sup> The bank was voluntarily liquidated January 1, 1935. All deposits were paid in full.<sup>43</sup> An insurance company moved into the building until 1950. Legend has it that the bank was robbed by Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. However, the movie “Bonnie and Clyde” was filmed at the bank building in 1966. Today the building is part of a private residence.<sup>44</sup>

Grace “Pete” Jackson (1905-1998) operated a grocery store on the same street as the Ponder State Bank building. The lunch counter of the store became so profitable, that she opened a café next door in a building built by Mr. Skaggs in 1908. Ms. Jackson owned and operated Ranchman’s Café from 1951 until 1985. The café has remained open and continues to draw visitors to Ponder. It has hosted many famous people since it first opened. These include John Wayne, Lillian Carter, Walt Garrison and many more. The cast of the movie Bonnie and Clyde, including Warren Beaty and Faye Dunaway, enjoyed the food while filming at the nearby Ponder State Bank building in 1966. Meatloaf used the café to film a music video in the 1980s. It has also been featured in many magazines and television shows.<sup>45</sup>

The first Ponder Rodeo was held in 1939. It was held on land owned by

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<sup>41</sup> “Ponder State Bank Burglarized.” *Dallas Morning News*, July 18, 1920.

<sup>42</sup> “Robbers Fail to Reach Money in Ponder Bank.” *Dallas Morning News*, April 28, 1925.

<sup>43</sup> “Ponder Bank Liquidated.” *Denton Record – Chronicle*, January 2, 1935. p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Seals, pages 37-38.

<sup>45</sup> Ranchman’s Roundup, Prickly Pear Productions, pages 2-3.

by the town east of the railroad tracks. The Ponder Rodeo was organized in 1939 by Chester January (b. March 30, 1896 - d. June 26, 1989) buried at Eakins Cemetery, Ponder; Sidney Ford (b. February 9, 1897 - d. January 29, 1988) buried at Blue Mound Cemetery, Denton; Dr. Martin Luther Holland, (b. July 5, 1896 - d. October 14, 1954) buried at IOOF Cemetery, Denton. (Source: *Ponder, the Little Town with the Big Rodeo* by Nita Seals, p. 54.)

Stockholders (in 1939) were J.B. Riney, Emmitt Riney, Paul Thomas, and Jack Skiles. Anyone that had spare time pitched in to work on the arena. Admission was twenty-five cents for adults and fifteen cents for children. The Ponder Parent-Teacher Association worked the concession stand. Money raised from the stand was used to pay teacher's salaries. The Ponder rodeo was known for having rough stock, especially the bulls. In 1942 due to rationing for World War II, people could not drive to Ponder to watch the rodeo. So, the rodeo arena was dismantled and moved to the fair grounds on Exposition Street in Denton.

When the war ended, the rodeo reopened in Ponder. The stockholders for the second Ponder Rodeo were M. L. Holland, Chester January, J. B. Riney, Emmitt Riney, and Charles Deussen. The arena cost \$15,000 and had a capacity of 3,500. The rodeo was held each Saturday night during the summer. Not only did the people of Ponder come to watch friends and relatives, they helped work the rodeo and concession stand. It became an important social event for the town. People would come from all over Denton County and some from Fort Worth and Oklahoma. When the arena was at

capacity, the population of 250 would grow ten times on any Saturday night. In 1948, there were eighteen shows with a combined audience of 35,000. In 1950 Denton started a rodeo. Participants and spectators were torn between which to attend. In the end, Ponder decided to close the rodeo with a two day show held in conjunction with the Gainesville Circus.<sup>46</sup> The rodeo tradition continues today in Ponder with the Ponder High School rodeo club winning the 2010 North Texas High School Rodeo Associations Team Championship. Seven team members also qualified to compete in the finals for individual titles.<sup>47</sup>

### **III. SIGNIFICANCE**

Ponder, Denton County, is significant as an example of the development of a small rural agriculturally-based community in Texas. The town was the center of community life in western Denton County. Ponder was also a commercial center for the ranches and farms of the area. The town site was purchased in 1886 as part of the expansion of the Santa Fe Railway. Platted as the Town of Gerald in 1903 and later renamed Ponder, it was incorporated in 1966. Old Town Ponder contains many commercial and residential properties that have served the community for over one hundred years.

Important early settlers to the community include Jeremiah and Nancy Burnett, the parents of Burk Burnett of the 6666 Ranch. They are both buried

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<sup>46</sup> Seals, Page 54-123.

<sup>47</sup> Broadstreet, Caleb, 2010, [Online Roar](http://roar.ponderisd.net/archives/roar_5-17-10.html). 'Rodeo Team Ready for Finals', August 2010. <[http://roar.ponderisd.net/archives/roar\\_5-17-10.html](http://roar.ponderisd.net/archives/roar_5-17-10.html)>.

in the Sams-Mennerly-Burnett Cemetery. The cemetery has a Historic Texas Cemetery designation.<sup>48</sup>

J. R. Christal, the son of Richard Christal and grandson of early Ponder settlers Silas and Mary Christal, was president of Exchange National Bank of Denton and a member of the Board of Regents of North Texas Normal College. He and his wife, Margaret, built an Italian Villa house on Oak Street in 1906. The house, in the Oak-Hickory Historic District, has a City of Denton Historic Landmark marker.<sup>49</sup>

The Eakins Cemetery, three miles south of Ponder, was the final resting place of Noah (1810-1868) and Susan (1816-1878) Eakins, who came to Denton County from Kentucky in 1855. The cemetery was established on their land about 1855-1858. Eakins family members and many other area pioneers and their descendants are buried in the cemetery. A Texas Historical Commission Subject marker was erected at the cemetery in 1995.<sup>50</sup>

Ponder represents an area rich in tradition and community spirit. While many towns concentrate on the commerce in the town, the residents of Ponder started first with schools and churches. Supporting the Ponder Independent School District and the sports teams associated with the school is a source of pride for residents. Students follow in their parent's footsteps to ensure winning seasons on the basketball court and in the rodeo arena.

In keeping with tradition, the Town of Ponder is currently working on a bond proposal for a sports complex, event center, and a new Town Hall and

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<sup>48</sup> Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 3452, p. 0755.

<sup>49</sup> Vann, Dolores. "Early Denton Homes," May, 1979.

<sup>50</sup> Texas Historical Commission Atlas, Marker Number 1331.

Library. With an estimated population of 1,150,<sup>51</sup> there is an increasing need for baseball, football, and soccer fields. The event center will house a rodeo arena. This would bring rodeo back to Ponder.

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<sup>51</sup> North Central Texas Council of Government. 13 September, 2010.  
<http://www.nctcog.org/ris/demographics/demographics.asp?pop=on&search=city&citycode=3322&cntycode=085&Submit=Submit>

#### IV. DOCUMENTATION

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Four Sixes Ranch, Burnett Family, viewed Oct. 11, 2010, <http://www.666ranch.com/the-story/burnett-family.html>

## ATTACHMENT A

The following information was researched and written by DJ Taylor, Marker Review Committee member, in response to need for clarification and questioning the accuracy regarding statement in historical narrative that said that land for the Ponder school building built in 1923 came from H.F. Wakefield's estate:

The land for the Ponder Independent Public School District no. 85, County of Denton, was conveyed to the school district on July 1, 1925 (Ponder had established a school in 1897 and became an ISD in 1923, according to Dr. Dale Odom's book, *An Illustrated History of Denton County*).

The donated land, lots 1 & 2, block 5, is listed in the deed as being in the "said town of Ponder (formerly Gerald) as platted by..." The owners of the land are C.F. & Ora Wakefield; H.W. and Maud James; W.T. and Emma Williams; T.C. and Edna Finely; T.C. and Fannie Gunter; and John and Della Gale. Those individuals had bought the land from C.F. Wakefield's brother, Earl Wakefield, on September 23, 1924. Earl had received the land from H.F. and Bertha Wakefield on January 14, 1916. H.F. Wakefield did not die until February 12, 1932. Deed source: 1925 deed for the school land (James-Wakefield-Finely-Gale-Gunter-Williams) is found in Volume 120, Page 208, Denton County.

Therefore any talk of the land coming from his (C.F. Wakefield's) estate is erroneous. The deeds to several parcels of land were given to H.F. Wakefield's children in early 1916, all to settle claims they may have regarding future inheritance. H.F. and Bertha Wakefield were living in Palo Pinto County at the time (he is buried at Flower Mound Cemetery).

Of all of the couples who bought and donated the land for the school, only C.F. (Charlie) Wakefield was an heir of H.F. Wakefield (not deceased at the time of the deed).