
Elm Community Life



Settlers began moving into the area that would be known as the Elm community during the late 1850s. John Finley Mills came to the Elm community with his sister, Jane, shortly after the Civil War. He opened a general store during the 1880s and later served as postmaster for the area. The post office, known as the Finley Post Office, was in existence for only three years, 1899-1902. Above is a picture of the Elm community general store, c. 1915.



Stephen Toler was one of the Elm community's influential settlers. He was a farmer and raised nine children in the community. Toler was one of five men who donated \$25 each for materials to construction a community school. In the photo on the left, Stephen Toler poses (sitting third from left) with friends and family in 1895. In the photo on the right, Walter Finley Mills, son of John Finley Mills, makes a delivery in downtown Dallas, c. 1914.



After its founding in 1903, the town of Irving became a center of commerce and social life for the farmers of the surrounding communities. The small downtown area was made up of several general stores, a drug store, and by 1908, a bank. In the photo above, a group of young men pose in front of the bank building, c. 1912.



During the early years of the 20th century, dairy farming became a major business in the communities surrounding Irving. The Elm community was home to one of the area's most wellknown dairies. The O'Connor Dairy, founded by Charlie O'Connor, was established on 2,500 acres in the Elm community in 1917. The dairy operated until 1953 when the growth of Irving began impinging upon it. The photos above are of the dairy during the 1930s.