

RANDOL MILL PARK

EVOLUTION OF A PARK

Robert (Bob) A. Randol (1850-1922) came to Texas from Winchester, Virginia in 1876 and purchased a working grain mill. The mill, originally built by Archibald F. Leonard, had been on the site since 1856. A small community sprouted up around the mill, including a saw mill, a cotton gin, a blacksmith and homes for workers. Mr. Randol served as postmaster for the community from March 1888 to April 1901.

Randol Mill Road was once a wagon trail about one mile north of the original Arlington town site. The mill was located just south of the Trinity River Bridge on the west side of Precinct Line Road. A state historical marker is located on private property at the site.

Farmers would come from as far away as 60 or 70 miles, often spending two or three days waiting to have their grain ground. This was done on a "custom" or percentage basis, meaning Randol kept a certain percent of the ground grain to supplement his fee. The mill produced the best coarse ground corn meal in the southwest and it was shipped all over the state. After flour making machinery was installed, product from the mill was sold in many Arlington general stores.

Randol's mill played an important role in the Arlington economy until his death in 1922. The mill, being near the river with plenty of water and shade, was an ideal spot for church gatherings, family reunions and large picnics. The structure was destroyed in 1933 by a fire accidentally set by picnickers.

In 1953, the City of Arlington purchased this park land with plans to develop a public golf course. This plan was defeated by two votes in a 1954 bond election. Instead, the land was developed into Randol Mill Park, providing Arlington residents with a place for fishing, picnicking, basketball, tennis, swimming, softball and baseball.

Many improvements have occurred at Randol Mill Park over the years, including renovations to the baseball fields used by the Optimist Club of Arlington since 1954. The original swimming pool, built in 1961, was replaced with a family aquatic center in 2002. In

2006, the City of Arlington partnered with Miracle Fields of DFW to construct the Doug Inman Miracle Field.

References:
Information provided by Nancy L. Bennett, President
Arlington Preservation Foundation
Photo of Robert A. Randol,
courtesy, Tarrant County College District Archives, Fort Worth, Texas
Photo of the Randol Mill,
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