

# Getting Tips from the Past

Preservation Dallas uses lectures,  
workshops and tours to entertain, educate

By Tricia Scruggs  
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For weeks, a quaint 19<sup>th</sup>-century carriage house has been drawing crowds to Swiss Avenue, captivating, entertaining and, above all, educating.

From field trips to demonstrations on the proper way to restore wood windows, Preservation Dallas officials say its annual summer institute – a mix of lectures, workshops and tours – is one more means of strengthening its army of advocates.

“We also hope to give them tools to preserve things in their own back yard,” said Sue Roebuck, director of administration. “It’s really for laymen and professionals alike.”

City Activist John Slate co-presented a recent session, sharing photos that highlighted Dallas parks projects funded and constructed under President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal, a Depression-era program that, among other economic endeavors, generated jobs.

“Dallas is not always thought of as a very green city, but it’s better than it could have been,” Mr. Slate said. For that, he credits the Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and National Youth Administration, which planted thousands of trees and landscaped and built some of the city’s most recognized landmarks and roadways.

Snapshots, aerial photos and original drawings of the New Deal projects are used as a guide for current restoration projects.

“It brings you from the past right up to the present,” Pat Randolph said after class, recalling how in the ‘50s, when she lived in Lake Highlands, she would gather her children and head to White Rock Lake – where many of the projects are located. To this day, she said, her family takes her to Flagpole Hill for Mother’s Day picnics.

Las summer’s schedule at the institute included a segment on combating teardowns. This year, field trips showcased a successfully restored building as well as modern homes and gardens.

Bob Curry, a preservation enthusiast who works in the city’s Code Compliance department, recently gave the group tips on ways historic districts can protect their neighborhoods by learning how to find and read old ordinances.

Mr. Curry said there are a lot of good people on staff working to ensure property owners follow the rules, but the help of informed and alert citizens is always necessary.

“You need to know your neighborhood and you need to know your ordinances,” he said. “The bottom line is, when you get into this kind of enforcement, you just can’t sit back and hope the city takes care of it.”

Tricia Scruggs is a freelance writer in Dallas. [tricia@triciascruggs.com](mailto:tricia@triciascruggs.com)