

On The Vine

GRAPEVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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FROM LOG CABIN TO BIG HOUSE TO CITY TREASURE

The Bushong Homesteads

Squint hard the next time you're near the Gaylord Texan resort, and try to erase 150 years of time. For it was there — right about where the *Ice!* displays appear every Christmas — that was home to one of Grapevine's earliest and most successful citizens, George Emanuel Bushong. All traces of his homesteads are nearly fifty years gone — moved, burned, submerged, or

kins) Bushong had already given birth to four children, though none had survived to their second birthday.

The cabin was constructed of hand-hewn local logs and muddy mortar, situated near the end of a dirt road which led east from the Grapevine cemetery to Bushong's expanding cotton gin, flour mill and sawmill operations. A few hundred feet behind it, the Quayle Branch Creek flowed north to join Denton Creek. As with so many early Texas homes, the log cabin was a bare-bones affair, hardly more than one room with a brick fireplace. It was so primitive that (so the stories go) a hanging quilt served as the front door. Eventually, a second room was added, converting it into a "dog-trot"-style cabin. This addition later burned. A small rear extension was also added, and for ten years this was the Bushong's home, where Elizabeth gave birth to four more children, two of whom grew to adulthood.

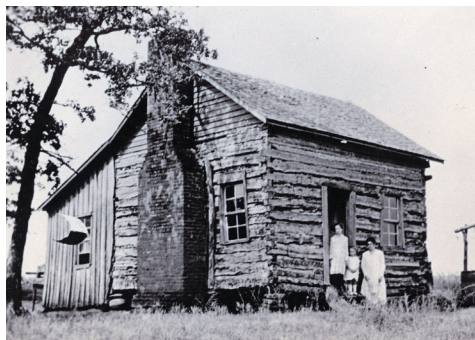
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G. E. Bushong's great-granddaughters, Ralphana Barnes (L) & Harryette Earnhardt (R) at the cabin dedication ceremony, May 17, 2025

buried under the footprint of the giant resort. But the first house George Bushong built for his family, known now as the Bushong Log Cabin, survived as a continuously-inhabited family dwelling for over a century and a half.

The cabin's exact age will probably never be known. Some say it was built before George went off to fight in the Civil War. Others propose a date of about 1871 — when he had already been a Grapevine resident for about a dozen years and married for five. By then, his wife Elizabeth (Jen-



This photo, thought to be from the 1920s, is the earliest known image of the 19th-century cabin. The people are unidentified.

MUSINGS FROM THE MAYOR

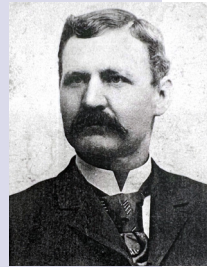
The Experiences of Charles Wall

He was born in Bentonville, Arkansas at the start of the Civil War. His house was burned by Union soldiers while his father was away fighting for the Confederacy. His mother moved the broken and smashed household and her five kids into a old square log crib until her husband Andrew returned from the war. They could never have imagined that Bentonville would some day become the home of the largest corporation in the world.

When Charlie Wall was twelve his family moved to the Pleasant Run community in Tarrant County, Texas. He desired to see the world, so he ran away from home two years later, having saved a few dollars from picking cotton and selling pecans. Charlie spent the next decades restlessly looking for something, and not quite finding it. But he did have adventures along the way.

He and a man named Jack Douthet headed out to the staked plains along the Chisholm Trail to hunt buffalo. He didn't find satisfaction there so he moved on to Las Cruces, New Mexico, to work cattle and live the life of a cowboy. He was promoted to the foreman of the Cueva Ranch near Ogden, New Mexico. Here he met Pat Garrett, the sheriff of Lincoln County. Charlie was at the jail with Pat Garrett and John Poe when they got the word that Billy the Kid had been cornered in a nearby ranch.

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Charles Wall, about 1895

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Charlie's Wild Life

A posse was formed, but Charlie Wall was not a part of it. He remained at the jail on July 14, 1881, the night Billy the Kid was killed.



Grapevine Mayor
William D. Tate

Charlie didn't find it there so he moved on, scouting for the next several years for General Nelson A. Miles during the devastating skirmishes with the Apache Indians. He didn't find it there either, so he moved on the Virginia Mine in Ouray, Colorado. Here

he got the fever for gold and the things gold would buy. This desire led him and a friend, Sam Collins, to the gold mines of Alaska, but like so many prospectors they were unsuccessful. He didn't find it in Alaska so he moved on to Canada where he came into the service of "Her Majesty" as a Canadian Mounted Policeman. He didn't find it there so two years later he moved on to gold fields in the jungles of Bolivia. Hard luck followed him again, and he would have lost his life there if it had not been for a Catholic priest who helped him escape. He didn't find it there so he moved on to mine in the lower district of California.

He didn't find it there either, so he came to Grapevine, Texas to visit family. And here he met someone - Mary Coble. They were married here on October 22, 1896.

Here it seems Charlie finally found what he was looking for. He spent the rest of his life farming and ranching. He and Mary had three children, including Martha Wall Cluck, who married local attorney Elwood Cluck and for years was Grapevine's leading historian. Charles Wall died in 1922 when he fell from his tractor and its wheels crushed his neck. His pistol and holster were purchased by Marvin Langley, one of our beloved nightwatchmen, and are now on display on the second floor of the Grapevine City Hall.

--William D. Tate

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The Log Cabin and the Big House

As George Bushong's fortune grew, he outgrew the humble house. He set his sawmill to turning wood for a grand two-story home: a mansion, practically, with two fireplaces, a front porch standing underneath six Grecian-style columns; and furnished with items hauled in from Bryan, Texas by ox-drawn wagons. It resembled the stately Southern homes of Bushong's youth. Especially by the local standards of 1881, the "Big House" must have been an imposing sight which reinforced his growing stature in the town.

Bushong's old log cabin was tucked away behind the Big House, but it still made cozy housing for various family members over generations. It is perhaps just barely visible as dot on aerial photographs from the early 1940s. In 1928, three years after Elizabeth Bushong passed away, the Bushong children swapped ownership of the Big House with the King Thweatt family who owned a home in Dallas.



The 1881 Bushong "Big House" as seen in a 1963 aerial photograph looking northeast. Part of Grapevine Lake is just visible at upper right. The imposing structure burned in 1977.



The cabin in the 1990s, still a residence.

The 1940s promised major changes to the area with the construction of Grapevine Lake. Large portions of the old Bushong homestead's acreage would end up underwater, and so the original 1871 cabin was moved, possibly as early as 1942. New subdivisions were being planned for

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The Fate of George Bushong’s Log Cabin

city-dwellers who wanted lakeside residences out in the country. One development called Shore Crest Acres wound northwest from the Bushong Road via a tree-lined lane which the developers named Red Bud Drive. The old log cabin was rebuilt there on a triangular section of land, about four hundred yards from where it had stood for the previous 80 years.



Spring 2024: no longer lived in, the cabin and accompanying barn were overgrown with brush and weeds, and at risk of falling apart.

A barn was added next to it, and soon the primitive 19th-century dwelling also sprouted incongruous 20th-century extensions on several sides — bedrooms, bathrooms, a front porch, and a mid-century kitchen — added by the new owner Bert Perry.



May 2024: Twentieth-century additions are cut away from the house before the move.

In this new spot the hybrid dwelling, though retaining the rustic facade, was modern enough to serve multiple residents for an additional eight decades. Its character changed over time — sometimes nicer, sometimes run-down. Always the 19th century log cabin remained at its heart.

Meanwhile, George Bushong’s “Big House” survived until a fire on December 5, 1977 burned it to the ground. Twenty years later, the place where it had

stood became the back buildings of the Gaylord Texan Resort.

The 1871 cabin remained a residence, eventually gaining recognition as the oldest continually-occupied residential building in Tarrant County. Families like Dave and Holly Duncan, and Ron and Jean Vice kept it maintained, and even preserved or reconstructed parts of the home to emphasize the historic aspects.

By last year, however, the cabin was vacant, while the land it sat on had simply become too valuable to support a single small 19th-century structure. J. I. Land, the firm which owned the acreage it sat on, wanted to build several homes in the space, while the City urgently wanted to preserve the



July 2024: The house is gently trucked to Liberty Park to a new home next to the Torian Cabin

historic structure. A deal was struck. Last spring, the 20th-century additions were cut away, the barn was torn down, the fireplace bricks removed, and the overgrowth pruned away. On July 12, 2024 the exposed one-room cabin was gently lifted up and driven by the H. P. Snow — slowly, carefully — two miles to Liberty Park, and settled down next to the Torian cabin, Grapevine’s other, somewhat larger 19th century survivor. Restoration and stabilization efforts have since been taking place handled by Weir Brothers Construction under the supervision of the Grapevine Heritage Foundation.

And now, having seen and survived so much, George Bushong’s 19th century log cabin was dedicated in its new, permanent location as a highlight of the 41st annual Main Street Fest on May 17, 2025. It is a home from the past...which has found its home for the future.

-- Larry Groebe

GRAPEVINE PIONEER EDUCATOR, BUSINESSMAN, BANKER AND MORE

Meet George Emanuel Bushong

Young George Bushong posed with pen and books, looking very much the scholar and schoolteacher

When 22-year-old George Emanuel Bushong arrived in the young settlement of Grapevine in 1858, he was probably the smartest man in town. After all, he had recently graduated from Emory and Howard College in Tennessee. Thanks to his college education, George soon found local employment as a schoolteacher. His charges were

the children of the early pioneers, families with last names like Jenkins, Leonard, and Dunn. His schoolhouse was a rude log cabin built along the east side of the community's new cemetery.

George, the third of eight children, was born March 26, 1836 in Sullivan County Tennessee. After graduating from college, George followed his older sister Sarah to Texas, probably on her recommendations of the potential promised by this unsettled country. While still in Tennessee, Sarah had married James Millard, and their young family had trekked to North Texas in 1856 and bought land along Denton Creek.

In April 1861, George had been teaching in Grapevine for almost three years when the Civil War began. In May, six short six weeks after the declaration of war, the 25-year-old Bushong enlisted in the First Texas Cavalry (also known as Texas Mounted Riflemen). A year later, records of the 8th (Taylor's) Battalion, Texas Cavalry, C.S.A., show him as Captain, commanding Company "E". He had a varied military career during the 1806s, involved in battles against both Indians and the Union. During the War he rode a horse named Jeff, and at the conclusion of the conflict, Bushong rode Jeff back to Grapevine to settle down.

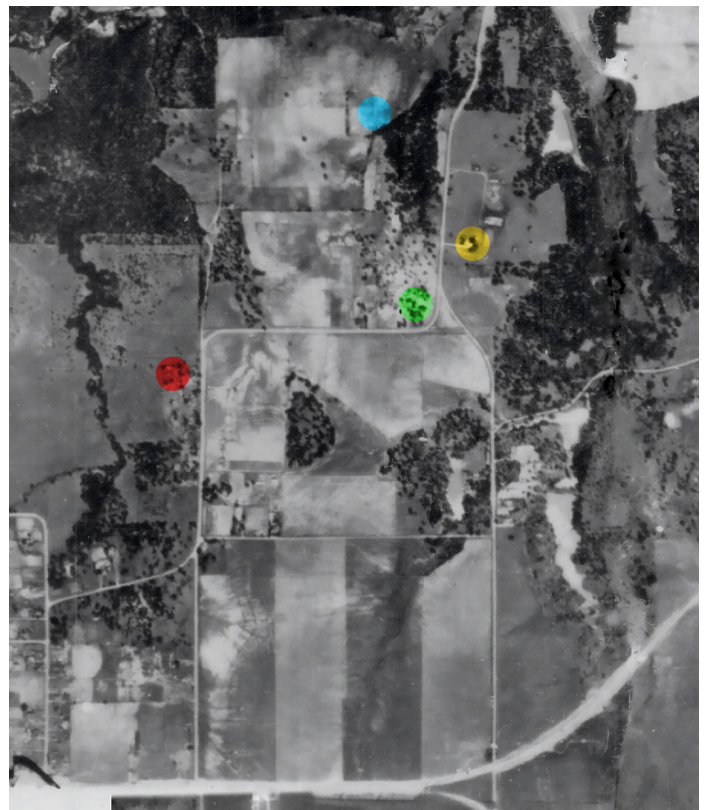
By this time he was now a confidant to many local families. Among them was E. M. Jenkins, who had set up the town's first retail store about the time Bushong first arrived. George taught Mr. Jenkins' daughter

Elizabeth in the schoolhouse before the war. Now, five years later, she had matured into a comely young woman of 18. Despite the 12 year difference in their ages, George Bushong and Elizabeth Jenkins were married in October 1866. Their first child, David Eli, was born a little less than a year later.

George worked for his father-in-law Eli at the general store, but he also intended to make his own mark. A short distance east of the old schoolhouse he leased several acres of Solon Dunn's property near to the Quayle Branch, a stream that fed into Denton Creek. There he set up a cotton gin, flour mill, and sawmill.

George and Elizabeth struggled to establish a family, as their first four children all died before the age of two. By 1871 George Bushong had built a log cabin next to his mill operations, and it was here in 1872 that the first of his children to survive to adulthood, Emma Bushong, was born. Mrs. Bushong became a founding member of Grapevine's new Baptist Church in December 1869, and her husband was

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In this 1942 aerial photo, George Bushong's "Big House" is marked in yellow. His old mill's probable location is in green, and the future 20th century site of his early log cabin is in blue. The red dot pinpoints Grapevine Cemetery. Bushong Road leads east from the cemetery, while the road at bottom is Northwest Highway.

George Bushong (cont'd.)

baptized into the church at its new brick building during in a big revival ceremony in July 1872.

The 1870s were prosperous for the Bushongs. George formed successful partnerships with other men around town. The mill operations were quickly successful - an 1874 Fort Worth newspaper advertisement notes that the firm of Jenkins and Bushong were selling off a motor, gin, and saw, presumably to buy bigger, better machinery. Upon his father-in-law's death in 1878, George took over the general store business in partnership with J. E. M. Yates. In 1879 a reporter from the Fort Worth Democrat visited both businesses. He *"stopped to examine the huge cotton ginning and grinding machinery of Mr. Geo. Bushong. This gentleman has certainly the most complete establishment of the kind I have seen. He does an immense business, and gives satisfaction to all his customers. His gin house is full of seed cotton, and his yard covered with bales."* Visiting the general store, the reporter continued *"I was surprised at the amount of business being done here, and at the large stocks of goods the merchants carry. Yates, Bushong & Co., have a mammoth stock of dry goods, huge rolls of carpeting, immense piles of clothing-in fact, a large stock of everything usually kept in a mixed dry goods store. They sell at low figures."*

Things were going so well, and the family growing (although still suffering infant mortality), the old cabin simply would not do. So they built a large and elegant home in front of it in 1881. (After all, he owned a sawmill!) The road from the cemetery to the mill and their house became known as the Bushong road. Once you got to their house, you could turn left and head north toward Denton, crossing an iron bridge which George had built over Denton creek. Bushong's Bridge — one of the first in the area — was a landmark for years, until swallowed up underneath Grapevine Lake.



By now a respected citizen doing well in multiple business ventures, he acquired parcels of land in and around town and Denton Creek, at one time reportedly owning as many as 1500 acres. The same Fort Worth Democrat reporter who visited in 1879 returned in 1881 to note that *"Yates, Bushong & Co. keep a stock of goods that would eclipse anything west of St. Louis, but won't take a man on time (payments) unless he has a cow to stand good for him."* The store even installed a newfangled pioneering device called a "telephone" to improve operations.

It was not all smooth going. Tragically, his mill complex burned down on September 18, 1884 in a major fire. Initially, Mr. Bushong encouraged others to build a new mill, telling a newspaper that *"if he was ten years younger he would rebuild his mill, and that this is a good place for a man to locate who desires to work at the mill business."* Eventually he returned the ginning and milling business himself and kept it going for many years. In 1885 he decided to sell his share of the Yates and Bushong Dry Goods business to his wife's brother, Zeb Jenkins. Mr. Bushong would soon become known for loftier matters.

In 1886 and again in 1888, George Bushong's name was placed into consideration as a candidate for the Texas Legislature, although others got the nod in the end. In 1887, now considered a *"leading and wealthy citizen,"* he was instrumental in getting the Cotton Belt railroad to Grapevine, helping to secure land for right of way and tracks. In 1890, When George was 54, the last of his thirteen children was born. Clint Bushong was one of six who survived to adulthood.

Knowing so well the value of education, G. E. Bushong was one of the five initial investors when Grapevine College was incorporated in May 1894. Now an active member of the Baptist church, when a new steam-operated cotton gin and compress was

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The Final Accomplishments of George Emanuel Bushong (cont'd)

opened in 1899 just south of the church, he became a lead plaintiff in a lawsuit accusing the mill of polluting the neighborhood with dust, lint, and noise.

“Uncle Bush,” as many called him, had one final important contribution to the town: the creation of the community’s first bank. In 1900, George E. Bushong, age 64, helped found the Grapevine National Bank. He took the position of the bank’s President, a post he held for the final five years of his life.

George Emanuel Bushong passed away in December 1905, age 69 after two weeks of illness and a year of “diminished health.” The *Grapevine Sun* reported “By the death of Mr. Bushong Grapevine has, without doubt, lost its most useful citizen. He was a benefactor in a true sense of the word. Many a one has received his assistance in time of need.” His funeral was held in the newly-completed chapel of the Baptist Church. He had done well for himself. At his death,

his estate was valued at over \$102,000: equivalent to over 3.6 million dollars today. It included over 500 acres of land, several downtown lots and buildings. His wife Elizabeth lived almost exactly 20 years more.

The Bushong road to Denton was submerged under Grapevine Lake, but the original portion of road still tracks east from the cemetery, exactly where Grapevine’s first log schoolhouse gave him his start in the community.

--Larry Groebe

May 17, 2025: Over two dozen Bushong relatives, plus City of Grapevine officials and guests attend the dedication ceremonies of the restored 19th-century Bushong log cabin



-- *There is no GHS Meeting in May* --

June 14: US Flag Retirement Ceremony

On June 14, Flag Day, at 09:00 AM the Capt. Molly Corbin Chapter of the DAR will host an event to retire old and/or torn U.S. flags at *Nash Farm*. Flags will be burned in accordance with guidelines from the U.S. Government regarding the proper disposal of our nation’s symbol. June 14, 2025 is the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army and there will be recognition of local Army Veterans and active soldiers. Please join us!



The Grapevine Historical Society • P. O. Box 995 / Grapevine, Texas 76099-0995 • grapevinehistory.org

Duff O’Dell, President • Larry Groebe, Communications Chair • updates@grapevinehistory.org

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The Society has a Facebook Group - search for “Grapevine Historical Society” and join!