

# Fort Worth Lynching Tour:

## Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse

Activism – Remembering – Love – Transparency – Community – Healing

Digital Guidebook by Adam W. McKinney

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***Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse*** is a group bike and car tour of the sites associated with the December 11, 1921 lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse in Fort Worth, TX. The tour is accompanied by a **downloadable, augmented reality app** that can be used in tandem with this document in each of the sites to better understand the story of Mr. Rouse's murder at the hands of a White mob. The goal of the tour is to **generate community healing through memorial activism**.

***Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse (FWLT)*** invites participants to ask the questions, **"What, how, why, and whom do we remember?"**

DNAWORKS hosts **Community Storycircles** for tour participants to process the tour experience together and share stories of **resistance, resilience, and healing**. We hope you will join us.

### **Context and Philosophy**

In the 1920s, Fort Worth, TX had one of the largest Ku Klux Klan memberships in the United States. Klan members paraded openly through downtown Fort Worth dressed in full regalia. The murderers of Mr. Rouse, arriving in a caravan of cars, kidnapped him from City & County Hospital before killing him. And after Mr. Rouse was hanged, hundreds of people drove to the site of the lynching to witness the result of his murder.

With **FWLT**, we work to **dismantle racism** and **undo the effects of anti-Black racial terror violence** by coming together and **physicalizing liberation**. We do this by caravanning through the same streets that the Klan did and reversing their route, riding bicycles and driving cars openly and **backwards through time** to remember Mr. Rouse.

**FWLT** is an event to **memorialize and to reclaim space and one another**.

### **Self-Care**

DNAWORKS encourages you to take care of your well-being on the tour. You, as a participant, are in the "driver's seat." Take the tour at your own pace and please only participate in the ways that make sense for you. Furthermore, DNAWORKS is working with a group of Black mental health care healers to support participants on the tour. Feel free to utilize this resource.

### **Digital Guidebook**

This **FWLT Digital Guidebook** is best used in tandem with the **FWLT augmented reality app**.

# NEW TRINITY CEMETERY

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While **FWLT** begins physically east of The Stockyards, **FWLT** begins remotely at **New Trinity Cemetery** in Haltom City, TX.

**Address:**

2804 N. Beach Street  
Haltom City, TX 76111

**Significance:**

On Monday, December 12, 1921,  
Mr. Fred Rouse was buried in  
New Trinity Cemetery.

**FWLT Facts:**

The first known burial in **New Trinity Cemetery** was that of Rev. Greene Fretwell. When he died in 1886, there was **no place in the area for African-Americans to be buried**. His widow, Francis, traveled on horseback to ask for donations from neighboring farms, ranches, and the trustees of Trinity Chapel Methodist Church. She promised that these families would, in the future, **always have a place to be buried**. She collected \$30 and bought two acres for a church and cemetery.

Sources: <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/203633/new-trinity-cemetery>  
<http://travelswright.blogspot.com/2010/02/new-trinity-cemetery-fort-worth-texas.html>

Many African-Americans buried in **New Trinity Cemetery** in the late 19th and into the 20th centuries are **buried on top of one another**.

**Mr. Fred Rouse's father, brother, and son are buried in New Trinity Cemetery.** None of their headstones has been located.

For more information on New Trinity Cemetery, please visit **Tarrant County Black Historical & Genealogical Society's website**: <http://www.tarrantcountyblackhistory.org/>.

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We begin and end each tour at the EAST end of the Stockyards in the parking lot of 600 E. Exchange Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76164 (see map image below).



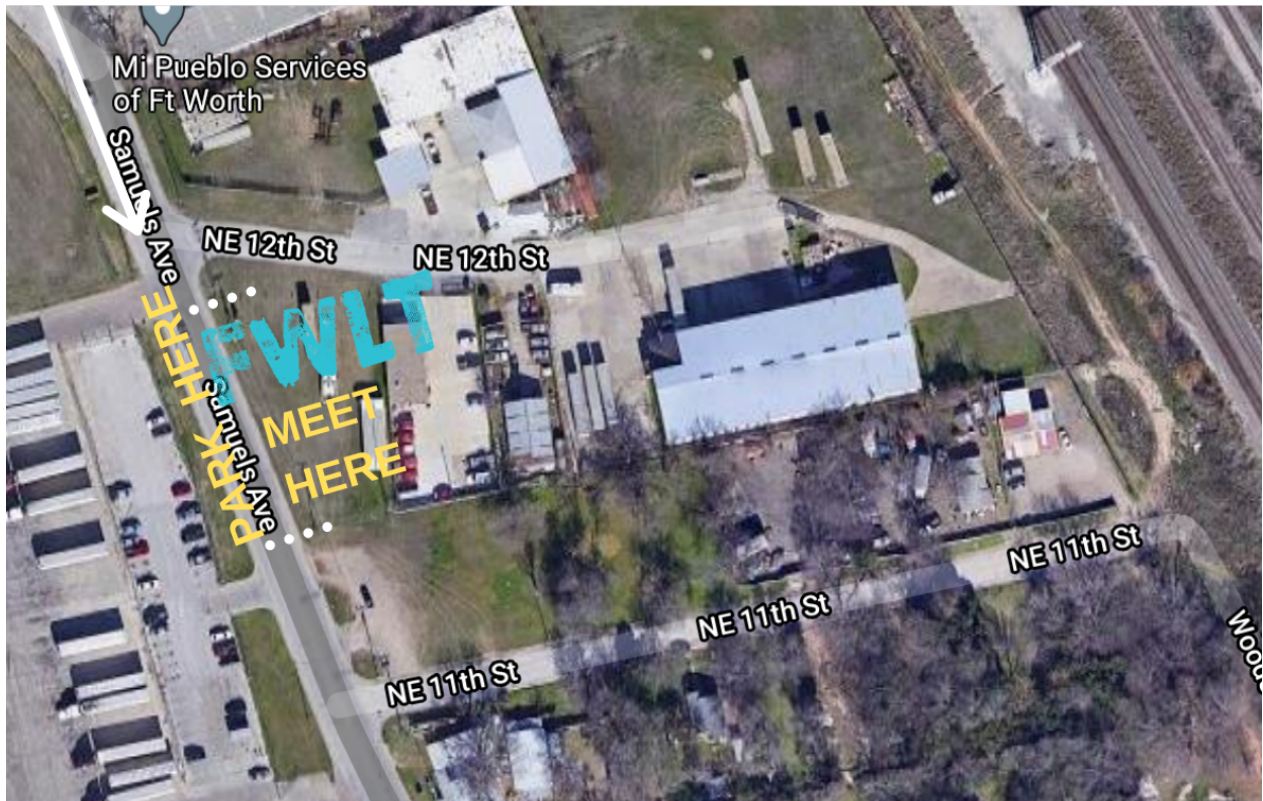
## Parking:

All FWLT participants can **park in the parking lot of the building at 600 E Exchange Ave.**

- To access the free parking lot, approach Niles City Blvd. from NE 23rd Street.
- Proceed north on Niles City Blvd.
- Turn left through the white gate.

**FWLT participants have in and out parking privileges.**

# SITE #1: THE “DEATH TREE”



## Parking:

Park on Samuels Avenue facing south. Look for FWLT Volunteers in neon yellow shirts.

## Address:

1000 NE 12th Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

## Significance:

On Sunday, December 11, 1921, at approximately 11:15pm, Mr. Fred Rouse was hanged at this site.

## FWLT Facts:

The **hackberry tree** from which Mr. Rouse was hanged was known as the “**Death Tree**” because Tom Vickery, a White man, had been hanged from the **same tree** one year prior. The justification for Vickery’s hanging was that Vickery **murdered a Fort Worth Police Department officer**.

**The “Death Tree” was uprooted** on Wednesday, December 14, 1921.

After Mr. Rouse was hanged, the murderers placed **a gun at his feet**. The gun was held as evidence at Niles City Hall, but it **went missing and has yet to be recovered**.

On December 12, 2019, in honor of the **98th anniversary of the lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse**, **Tarrant County Coalition for Peace and Justice (TCCPJ)** held a **Community Remembrance Soil Collection Ceremony** during which community members **extracted soil from the site and**

**placed the soil in two jars.** One jar remains here in Fort Worth, TX. The other was sent to the **Equal Justice Initiative's Legacy Museum** in Montgomery, AL, and is included among **jars of soil from other U.S. lynching sites.**

In January 2021, TCCPJ **purchased the site of the lynching of Mr. Fred Rouse** and will transform the space into **Fred Rouse Memorial Park** (2021 groundbreaking, 2022 opening). Installed in **Fred Rouse Memorial Park** will be an Equal Justice Initiative **Fred Rouse Historical Marker.**

Source: <https://hometownbyhandlebar.com/?p=13213>

For more information about the **Equal Justice Initiative**, visit [www.eji.org](http://www.eji.org).

For more information about **Tarrant County Coalition for Peace and Justice**, visit: [www.tccpj.org](http://www.tccpj.org).



# EN ROUTE

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Things to look for en route to the former **City & County Hospital**:

## **Trader Oak Park**

Under an oak tree in 1849, one of the **first trading posts in North Texas** was established. The oak tree still stands in the park.

## **Samuels Avenue Neighborhood**

The **Samuels Avenue Neighborhood** is the **oldest neighborhood in the City of Fort Worth**. The neighborhood is a product of the **rapid growth of the City's economy and population** during the late part of the Victorian Era (1837-1901) and early 20th century.

Source: [https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/wm136R4\\_Samuels\\_Avenue\\_Architectural\\_Fabric\\_Fort\\_Worth\\_TX](https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/wm136R4_Samuels_Avenue_Architectural_Fabric_Fort_Worth_TX)

## **Pioneers Rest Cemetery** (620 Samuels Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76102)

Pioneers Rest Cemetery (est. 1849) is the **oldest public cemetery in Fort Worth** and one of the **oldest in Tarrant County**. This cemetery was for **Whites only**. Buried here are: Major Ripley Arnold (founder of Fort Worth, TX), Ephraim Merrill "Eph" Daggett (the "Father of Fort Worth"), members of the prominent Ellis family, and General Edward H. Tarrant (after whom Tarrant County is named).

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pioneers\\_Rest\\_\(Fort\\_Worth,\\_Texas\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pioneers_Rest_(Fort_Worth,_Texas))

## **Charles E. Nash Elementary School** (401 Samuels Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76102)

This Spanish Colonial style elementary school building was **built in 1927**. In 1936, an addition was constructed and **designed by Earl T. Glasgow**, who **designed the KKK Klavern No. 101 auditorium** in the early 1920s. Earl Glasgow was a member of the KKK Klavern No. 101.

Source: <http://www.fortwortharchitecture.com/nashelem>

## **Black Churches**

### **Allen A.M.E. Church** (116 Elm Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102)

"**African Methodism** had its beginning in Fort Worth with the coming of Reverend Moody in 1870. The first formal meeting place was a **one-room frame house** located in the 1000 block of East Second Street. The site was **purchased on March 2, 1878**. On Sunday morning, December 22, 1912, more than one hundred persons, whose names are **carved in a white marble slab** in the north vestibule and whose names are etched in the **art glass windows**, unselfishly gave \$25 each. That effort was the beginning of the founders' dream that ended with a **majestic, modified Gothic structure** which the church currently occupies.

The building of the new \$20,000 **Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church** was **dedicated on July 22, 1914**. The church is **perpendicular Gothic and pressed brick**, an architectural form taken by most noted cathedrals and churches of the world. The **structure is 48 x 100 feet** and has a seating capacity of 1,350. It has a **main auditorium, a gallery, a basement, and nine extra rooms**. In September 1982, Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church became a **State Historical Marker Site**. In

September 1983, the church was designated as a **Texas Historical Landmark**. In September 1984, Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church was recorded in the **National Register of Historic Places** in Washington, D.C. A plaque symbolizing the A.M.E. Church was made and stationed on the east exterior of the church. On September 23, 1984 during the 114th Anniversary, the church's symbolic plaque and a simulated **National Register Plaque** were unveiled and dedicated.”

Source: <http://www.allenchapelFW.org/>

**Mt. Gilead Baptist Church** (600 Grove Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102)

“**Mt. Gilead Baptist Church is the oldest continuously operating African-American Baptist Church in Fort Worth.** It was organized in September 1875 by twelve former enslaved people who later built a modest structure in a Black settlement called **Baptist Hill** near present-day 15th and Crump Streets. Considered the **mother church of Fort Worth Black Baptists**, it soon became a symbol of **African American self-determination**. Once classified a megachurch in the 1920s because of its huge congregation and local influence, today the church sits as a reminder of what was once a vibrant Black business district in downtown Fort Worth.

By 1913, Mt. Gilead entered the new sanctuary, designed by **Black architect Wallace Rayfield** and adorned with a **pipe organ**, elaborate **opera chairs in the balcony**, and the **first indoor baptismal in Texas**. It had a **library with law books**, a **day nursery for working mothers**, and a **kindergarten**. The basement was furnished with a **cafeteria** serving signature dishes, a **gymnasium**, and the **only indoor pool in the city where Black children could swim**. The **auditorium was the venue for social events**, including a **performance by contralto Marian Anderson in 1939**.

Although **Mt. Gilead has seen declining membership over the last few decades**, setbacks in the efforts to restore the building, and a scheme in 2016 to sell the church property to help expand the downtown Fort Worth business district, which the congregation defeated in a lawsuit, **the church still stands at its 1913 location**. Mt. Gilead Baptist Church is a **local landmark that remains a formidable icon in Fort Worth**.”

Source: <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/mt-gilead-baptist-church-fort-worth-texas-1875/>

### **Fort Worth's Oldest African American Neighborhoods**

**"African American neighborhoods sprouted up in many geographic areas in Fort Worth. The First was the 3rd Ward,** the area south of 12th Street, African Americans settled in the 3rd Ward around the late 1900s. At that time, **six percent of Fort Worth's population was African American with the greatest concentration in the 3rd Ward.** In search of better opportunities, African Americans migrated to other areas in Fort Worth. These early settlements included: **Mosier Valley** (Established by formerly enslaved people Robert and Dilsie Johnson in the 1870s, this is the oldest historic African American community in Texas.); **Baptist Hill** (Blacks settled in the area in the late 1900s to 1950s.); **Rock Island Bottoms** (Blacks settled in the areas in the late 1800s.); **Riverside** (Blacks began migrating to the area in the early 1900s.); **Como** (Blacks began purchasing land in 1906.); **Southside** (Blacks began migrating to the area in 1910.); **Trezevant Hill** (Blacks began migrating to the area in the 1930s.); **Greenway** (Blacks began migrating to the area in the mid-1940s.); and **Stop Six** (Blacks lived in Stop Six beginning in 1896 when Amanda Davis bought a property for \$45.)."

Source: [Fort Worth Memories and History Facebook Page](#)

### **Black Fort Worth and Interstate 35**

You may notice **exits from highway I-35 in the area.** The construction of I-35 in the late 1950s **enforceably divided Black communities from one other.** For more information about how **cities and states planned highways through Black neighborhoods,** specifically, see:

- "Old Fort Worth Neighborhood, Divided by Interstate 35, Renewed Piece by Piece"

<https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/fort-worth/article3839350.html>

- *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein

<https://www.npr.org/2017/05/17/528822128/the-color-of-law-details-how-u-s-housing-policies-created-segregation>

- "How the U.S. Government Destroyed Black Neighborhoods"

<https://catalyst.independent.org/2020/04/02/how-the-u-s-government-destroyed-black-neighborhoods/>

- "Racial Bias and Interstate Highway Planning: A Mixed Methods Approach"

<https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1208&context=curej>

- "The Road to Disinvestment: How Highways Divided the City and Destroyed Neighborhoods"

<https://www.aiadallas.org/v/columns-detail/The-Road-to-Disinvestment-How-Highways-Divided-the-City-and-Destroyed-Neighborhoods/pt/>



# SITE #2: CITY & COUNTY HOSPITAL

**FWLT** continues to the former **City & County Hospital**.

## Parking:

Follow the white arrows on map below. Park in Bass Hall “Private Parking” lot at 550 S. Jones Street. Look for FWLT Volunteers in neon yellow shirts.

## Address:

330 E 4th Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76102

## Significance:

On Sunday, December 11, 1921, at approximately 11:00pm, Mr. Fred Rouse was kidnapped from this site.

**Meet on the north side of 4th Street  
between S. Jones and Calhoun  
Streets.**



## FWLT Facts:

**City & County Hospital was built in 1914.** Among the hospital's early challenges was the **Spanish flu of 1918**. The 1914 building continued to house City & County Hospital until 1939, when a **new City & County Hospital was built on South Main Street**. In 1943, the original City & County Hospital building was headquarters for military police stationed here. In the early 1950s

it was a **polio treatment center**. The building is now Maddox-Muse Center, part of the **Bass Hall complex**.

Source: <https://hometownbyhandlebar.com/?p=8966>

One can view **the stairs leading down to the basement level of the former Negro ward** of the building.

**The criminal justice system failed Mr. Fred Rouse. No one was ever found guilty** in his murder. Historical documentation tells us that there was "**not enough evidence**" to find any one person guilty for the atrocity.

In 2016, the City of Fort Worth created the **Mayor's Race and Culture Task Force** in response to the incident of excessive force caught on video between a Black Fort Worth mother named **Jackie Craig** and a White FWPD Officer named William Martin. Martin was suspended for 10 days for using excessive force.

In the early morning of October 12, 2019, **Atatiana Jefferson** was fatally shot in her Fort Worth home by White FWPD Officer Aaron Dean. In December 2019, Dean was indicted for murder. Her murder is often compared to the September 2018 murder of **Botham Shem Jean** in Dallas.

## EN ROUTE

Things to look for en route to **1012 N. Main Street**:

### **Tarrant County Courthouse**

Construction of **Tarrant County Courthouse was completed in 1895**. In 1953, the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a monument in front of Tarrant County Courthouse dedicated to Confederate Army soldiers. As a result of **the murder of Mr. George Floyd** and the uprisings that ensued, **the monument was removed** on June 13, 2020 and was placed in storage.

In 1925, the three largest buildings on Main Street, Fort Worth were **Tarrant County Courthouse**, the former **Fort Worth Power and Light Company Power Plant** (built 1912), and **1012 N. Main Street** (the former KKK Klavern No. 101 Auditorium).

# SITE #3: 1012 N. MAIN STREET

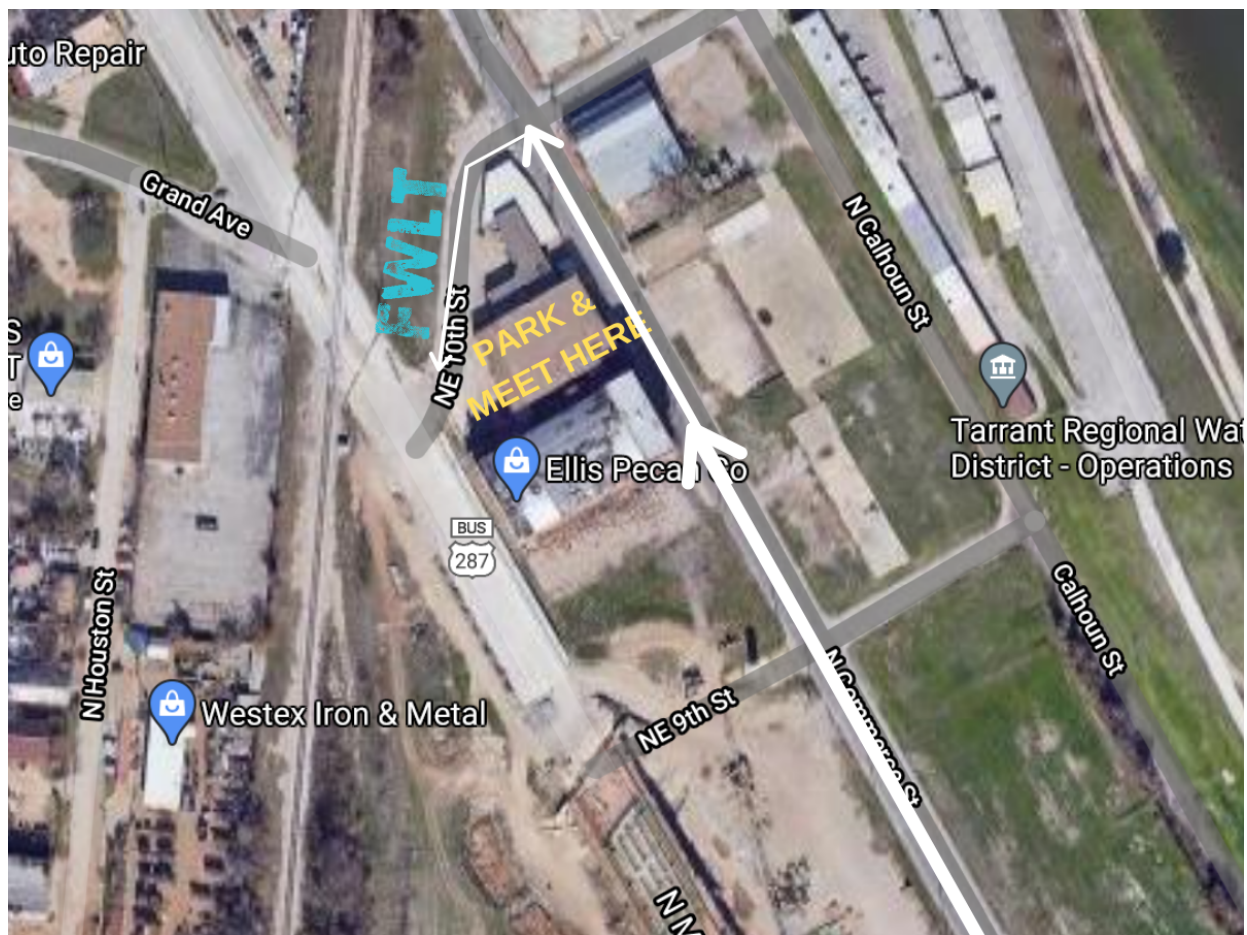
**FWLT continues to 1012 N. Main Street.**

**Address:**

1012 N. Main Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76164

**Significance:**

In the 1920s, Fort Worth had one of the largest KKK memberships in the United States. 1012 N. Main Street was constructed to support Klan activities.



**Parking:**

Parking is located on the north side of the building and accessed from N. Commerce Street. Look for FWLT Volunteers in a neon yellow shirts.

### **FWLT Facts:**

This building was built to support KKK membership activities in 1924 and was rebuilt in 1925 after a **suspicious fire**. **Many White Fort Worth residents at the time were members** of the various KKK membership clubs around the city.

DNAWORKS and six other local organizations are working to **acquire and transform 1012 N. Main Street into the Fred Rouse Center and Museum for Arts and Community Healing**. The **“1012 Leadership Coalition”** models a **pluricultural and shared leadership approach** to acquiring, programming, and managing the proposed center. This Coalition ensures that the building will be led and programmed by representatives of the cultural groups that were—and still are—targeted by the KKK in this region, thereby **returning resources to the communities** who suffered at their hands. In so doing, we **bring together groups of people in Fort Worth that are often still systemically siloed and separated**. Specifically, we represent African American, Catholic, Hispanic, immigrant, Jewish, Native American, and LGBTQQ2SPIAA+ populations. **For more information, visit: [www.transform1012.org](http://www.transform1012.org).**

## EN ROUTE

Things to look for en route back to **The Stockyards**:

The former **Swift & Company** meatpacking building sat east and south of the former Swift & Company administration building (that still stands at 600 E. Exchange Ave.). The buildings associated with Swift & Company meatpacking that still stand were built at the beginning of the 20th century. This building stood west to the **five rail lines that extended to the plants**. The rails were built to **support the transfer of beef from around the country**. A streetcar line was extended to the area on Packers Avenue. **Swift & Company closed the plant in 1971.**

Source: <https://www.fortwortharchitecture.com/north/swiftplant.htm>

We do not know in which building Mr. Fred Rouse worked. Mr. Fred Rouse’s great nephew, **Mr. Robert Rouse, Sr.**, also worked for Swift & Company. In the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* article entitled **“Color of Hate: How the Jim Crow Era Shamed and Shaped Our City”** (October 2002), Tim Madigan interviewed Mr. Robert Rouse, Sr.

Look for the **'S' insignia** on the **remaining southern-facing staircase** of the former meatpacking buildings on NE 23rd Street (which is reminiscent of the **staircase on E. Exchange Avenue**).

**Tarrant County Coalition for Peace and Justice** is working to install a **Fred Rouse Historical Marker** in the Stockyards to remember Mr. Fred Rouse, his life, and legacy.

Important organizations of note en route from **1012 N. Main Street** to **The Stockyards** include: **Artes de la Rosa Cultural Center for the Arts** ([www.artesdelarosa.org](http://www.artesdelarosa.org)) and **National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum and Hall of Fame** ([www.cowboysofcolor.org](http://www.cowboysofcolor.org)).



# THE STOCKYARDS

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**FWLT** continues remotely to **The Stockyards**.

**Address:**

600 E. Exchange Avenue  
Fort Worth, TX 76164

**Significance:**

On Tuesday, December 6, 1921, at 4:30pm, Mr. Fred Rouse was attacked by a White mob in the Niles City (now Fort Worth) Stockyards. He was bludgeoned with a streetcar guardrail and stabbed several times. His skull was fractured in two places. He was left for dead in the middle of the street.

**FWLT Facts:**

“Incorporated in 1911, the City of Niles was called the “richest Little Town in the World” because of its size and the number of large business located there. Included in the townsite, which eventually covered 1.5 square miles, were major meat packing firms, the Fort Stockyards, two grain elevators, a cotton seed oil company, and a petroleum refinery and pipeline plant. By the early 1920s the town’s taxable property was valued at \$30,000,000. Niles was named for Louville Veranus Niles (1839-1928), a successful Boston businessman who first visited Fort Worth in 1893. His reorganization of the Fort Worth Packing Company in 1899 led the firms of Swift and Armour to locate their plants in the area in 1902, rapidly increasing nearby business development. Substantial municipal tax revenues helped make the city of Niles a progressive community. Under the supervision of a Mayor and five Aldermen, funds were used for improvement in roads, utilities, and city services. The two school districts which served the town also benefited from the large tax base. Despite legal efforts beginning in 1921 to remain incorporated and avoid annexation, the City of Niles became part of Fort Worth in 1923.”

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Niles\\_City\\_Fort\\_Worth\\_Texas\\_Historical\\_Marker\\_\(8118059688\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Niles_City_Fort_Worth_Texas_Historical_Marker_(8118059688).jpg)

***Fort Worth Lynching Tour: Honoring the Memory of Mr. Fred Rouse***

is made possible with **FUNDING** from:

Asylum Arts

City of Fort Worth Diversity & Inclusion Department

DuBose Family Foundation

Mid-America Arts Alliance

and an Anonymous Fund at the North Texas Community Foundation

in **PARTNERSHIP** with:

Fort Worth Bike Sharing and Tarrant County Coalition for Peace and Justice



For more information, visit:  
[www.dnaworks.org](http://www.dnaworks.org)

