

# Baseball park named for Diboll's number one fan

By ELLEN TEMPLE  
Special Press Writer

There's a bronze plaque on the baseball park fieldhouse in Old Orchard Park in Diboll which names it the Lewis Hampton (Pop) Jordan Memorial Field.

Who was "Pop" Jordan and how did a ball park come to bear his name?

Two of Mr. Jordan's daughters, Mrs. Ora Kimball and Mrs. Vina Wells, his daughter-in-law Mrs. Willis Jordan, and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren live in Diboll.

Ora Kimball tells her father's story: Lewis Jordan was born in 1876 and reared on a farm in what is now the City Park in Pineland, Sabine County, long before there was a mill or a railroad. His father was a Church of Christ minister and a carpenter who decorated the farmhouse with the gingerbread trim that was so fashionable at the time.

Lewis married Mellie Willis whose family owned a large farm in Gum Bottom, outside of Brookeland. Sometime after their marriage the Jordans ran the Willis farm for a number of years. They had four children — three daughters and a son. Besides tending crops, Mr. Jordan also ran cattle and broke horses. Mrs. Kimball remembers that as children: "We'd be spellbound when he'd be on one of those bucking horses, whipping his big white hat that he always wore from side to side."

Mr. Jordan also scaled logs for Houston Oil Company. That is, he would measure the length and breadth of logs to figure how many board feet they'd make so that the oil company would know how much to charge Kirby Lumber Company for cutting.

Meanwhile Mrs. Jordan, who was a wonderful cook, ran a boarding house in Bronson Front, four miles out of Brookeland. And then she ran a boarding house in a lumber camp called White City, which was out of Brookeland, close to Broadus. By then, Mr. Jordan had started scaling for Southern Pine Lumber Company.

And in 1922 the Jordans moved to Fastrill, a Southern Pine Lumber Camp in Cherokee County near Alto and Grapeland. Lumber camps were created to bring the lumber workers to the woods. At that time the workers were less mobile than they are today. Instead of today's trucks, they hauled logs with mules and oxen and carried them to the mills by

train. The camps were regular little towns in the woods, created for the loggers, mule tenders, track crews and their families. To hear those who lived there tell it, Fastrill was the best lumber camp in East Texas!

Mrs. Kimball and her husband also lived in Fastrill where they ran a barbershop, cleaning and pressing service and the only filling station in town.

Mr. Jordan scaled logs in the woods for Southern Pine. He'd measure the diameter of the small end of a log inside the bark with a Doyle Scale Stick and gauge the length with a practiced eye, or actually measure the length when he couldn't tell by looking, to determine how many board feet a log would make. Nowadays the company simply weighs the logs on the truck to determine how many board feet they contain.

Mr. Jordan also tended the large garden and butchered hogs and calves which Mrs. Jordan required for her boarding house that she operated for Southern Pine in Fastrill until the late 1930's.

Lumberjacks had to have a place to eat and sleep — often they were bachelors or their families lived in another town where the children could complete their education since the Fastrill school only went to the sixth grade.

## Health topic for meeting of local AARP

The Diboll Chapter 1110 of AARP will put on a special health program at its regular meeting 2 p.m. Tuesday March 7, in the Fair Acres Community Center at the corner of Maynard and Booker Streets.

The public is invited to attend and see the motion picture film *Without Warning*. This film deals with heart failure and related problems. Then there will be a question and answer period, with questions being answered by a group of retired nurses, one of whom has had personal experience with heart problems. Even now she lives a happy normal life only because she wears implanted in her chest an electronic device to keep her heart beating properly.

There will also be a short business session and refreshments will be served.

Mrs. Jordan with the help of her staff ran the whole boarding house, fixing biscuits for as many as 60 boarders. And the cost for three meals and a bed was only 65 cents a day. When Southern Pine officials like Watson Walker and P. H. Strauss would come in from Texarkana for a big meeting, they'd always come to the boarding house in Fastrill for their banquet which Mrs. Jordan served on a long, cloth covered table.

Many people think that Fastrill was the best place in the world to be during the Great Depression of the late 1920's and early '30's. "The Depression didn't bother us," says Mrs. Kimball. "For fuel, we used wood which we would cut and a neighbor would haul with a borrowed company wagon. There was plenty of space for a garden. There was no money, but no one had any."

And there was plenty of social activities. Mr. Jordan especially loved to sing. He'd call the community together for an old time singing, and they'd sing religious songs. Sometimes they'd have box suppers, auctioning off picnic boxes that the girls and ladies had prepared and decorated, to raise money for school equipment and books. There were school centered activities and plays. Mrs. Kimball echoes the sentiments of just about every past Fastrill resident when she says, "I loved it."

Shortly after the Jordans moved to Diboll, Southern Pine Lumber Company finished cutting in the Fastrill area

and shut down the lumber camp. By 1941 the camp was no more. (Past residents still have a homecoming at the Neches River Bridge about a mile from the town site every year.)

Diboll wasn't much of a town then and no one had a garden. When the people from Fastrill moved in, they wanted to raise vegetables. Their desire and World War II brought about the creation of a Victory Garden. As part of its contribution to the War effort, Southern Pine set aside a large plot of land near what is now the football field for Diboll's Victory Garden.

"Pop" Jordan, as everyone called him, oversaw that operation for the company. Individuals would plant their own seeds, but he planned the garden. And he would plow for ladies who needed help because their men, who were still cutting logs with cross-cut saws and worked long days in the woods, came in too late to plow.

Southern Pine also built a canning plant so that each family could can its own produce. Mrs. Vina Wells, the late Myrtle Wells, and others worked there to help those ladies who didn't know how to use the canning equipment. Mr. Jordan stayed in touch with young people. Until she died in 1960, Mrs. Jordan and he reared their grandson Joe and followed other grandchildren's activities. And "Pop" ran a concession stand on the Diboll school campus where he sold candy and school supplies.

And, most importantly, "Pop" Jordan was Diboll's

number one football and baseball booster. Even though he was in his 80's, he went to all the games, including the out of town ones. Doyle "Pop" Rich, Diboll schools' business manager, took him to out of town games. And they always had good times. Mr. Jordan never just sat there and watched. But he was always up and yelling for his team or booing the umpire like any good baseball fan. He also liked the Astros, knew all the players, and attended their first game in the Astrodome.

Besides sports, one of Pop's greatest pleasures was singing; he led the singing at his church in Diboll. In 1967, when he was 91, despite family protest, he insisted on leading the singing at Dunn's Chapel Church outside of Lufkin. He was an independent spirit and said in his later years that he was living on borrowed time and couldn't worry about what might happen to him. And besides he couldn't think of a better place to go than leading singing in church. Shortly after that trip, he

became ill. "Pop" Jordan had worked really hard for a lighted baseball field in Diboll. When he died, Jim Simmons who was the Diboll football coach went to Diboll State Bank, left a donation and said, "I want a memorial built to 'Pop.'"

And so when the lighted baseball field in Old Orchard Park was completed, the Diboll City Council named it for Pop Jordan. And H. G. Stubblefield dedicated the field in Pop's memory on Diboll Day in 1970.

Here's how the bronze plaque on the field house reads:

Lewis Hampton (Pop) Jordan Memorial Field  
Built in 1969 — dedicated Oct. 3, 1970  
To Lewis Hampton (Pop) Jordan (1876 to 1967)  
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## LIC's business tops \$1 billion

AUSTIN — Lumbermen's Investment Corporation of Austin, a mortgage banking institution operating in the Mid-South and Southwest, "topped \$1 billion in mortgage loan servicing in 1977," according to president Wayne McDonald, "ranking the Texas business firm among the nation's largest."

McDonald attributed the record mortgage servicing volume to a surge in new real estate loans amounting to over \$200 million during 1977.

"We are growing because the economic climate of the Sun Belt states including those in the Mid-South, is extremely active — and so are we."

Lumbermen's Investment Corporation was organized in 1954 by a group of lumber dealers for the purpose of making home improvement loans in smaller cities in Texas and Oklahoma. During the 1960's the firm began full fledged mortgage banking operations and is now a subsidiary of Temple-Eastex Incorporated, the Forest Products Division of Time Inc.

The Austin based firm is a ready residential and commercial loan source in Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Minnesota and originates and services loans for over 200 institutional lenders throughout the United States.

In addition, LIC is involved in general insurance, land development, and ownership and management of extensive commercial properties.

The firm's insurance agency and newly chartered Sun Belt Insurance company writes property, casualty, life and health insurance for personal, commercial and industrial risks.

LIC owns and manages multi-million dollar commercial properties throughout the

Southwest, including the Sheraton Crest Hotel and the prestigious Westgate Building in Austin.

Currently, LIC is participating in the development of over 5,000 acres throughout the Sun Belt states.

Last year, LIC purchased Schumacher Mortgage Company of Memphis, Tennessee from Crocker National Corporation, the San Francisco, California Bank Holding Company. This firm has offices in Knoxville, Nashville, Chattanooga, Kingsport and Memphis in Tennessee, and in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Previously, LIC had acquired Loper Mortgage Company, one of the largest mortgage banking firms in San Antonio, Texas, which has loan production offices in Kingsville, Midland/Odessa, San Angelo, Del Rio and Universal City.

In addition to the above cities, LIC operates production offices in Austin, Dallas, Houston, Killeen/Temple and Oklahoma City.

In the Austin area LIC is involved in the residential communities of Onion Creek, Anderson Mill, the Village of Western Oak and Colony Park.

## Singles club being formed

LUFKIN — A new singles club is being organized for this area with the first meeting to be March 2 at 7 p.m. at the Community Center at Chambers Park located at Pershing and Feagan, Lufkin.

All ages are welcome. For more information, call 634-2905.



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