



## ***Legend of the Ding Dong Daddy***

What is a Ding Dong Daddy?

This is the question most visitors to Dumas, Texas ask after arriving in the county seat city of Moore County, lodged in the near northwestern top of the Texas Panhandle.

Let's go back to the beginning – First of all, the man who first developed the town was named Louis Dumas and the town was his namesake. This all took place in the late 1800's as the Texas Panhandle was one of the final areas of the State of Texas to be developed from the raw prairie.

Dumas, the town developer, stayed in the city with his name only a short time, but the name remains to this day. And, what began as a dusty crossroads on the prairie above the "big blues" north and west of Amarillo above the Canadian River began to grow. First, the town was given little chance to survive, but the pioneer-stock was hardy stuff and they stuck it out. The small village was only 571 souls in the 1920's and late in that decade a man who was to become a moderately successful band leader and song writer, Phil Baxter, chanced upon Dumas. He spent a few weeks in Dumas getting acquainted and after he had a steak continued his journey. Less than a year later Baxter penned the words and tune to a song which he named "*I'm a Ding Dong Daddy from Dumas.*"

The catchy song gained national recognition when Phil Harris, band leader for the Jack Benny Radio Show, recorded the song.

Dumas, like many smaller towns, grew and prospered during the years prior to and during World War II. During this time several industrial plants had been constructed and the town boasted 2,117 population in 1940. Shortly after the end of World War II, local Dumas residents organized and began operations of radio station KDDD. The three "D's" came from the song – *I'm a Ding Dong Daddy from Dumas.*

Radio station KDDD used the song as its theme song and later early radio station manager, and later owner, Ken Duke, commissioned an Amarillo commercial artist, Hut Hutson, to create an image of the Ding Dong Daddy of the song.

As a result, Hutson created the caricature that is the "Ding Dong Daddy from Dumas" complete with radio microphone. The radio station copyrighted the caricature and used it as its trademark. The little Ding Dong Daddy became popular and in the early 1950's KDDD loaned the logo to the Dumas Chamber of Commerce for use in promoting Dumas, with the provision that the logo not be used by any commercial business other than to boost Dumas.

A few years later, the Chamber of Commerce created a counterpart, giving life to the Ding Dong Dolly from Dumas.

Plastic pins of both the “Daddy” and “Dolly” have been give wide distribution over most of the Free World as Dumas residents have traveled and given away the small caricatures of plastic.

Today, the Moore County Historical Museum has on display the original artwork of the “Ding Dong Daddy from Dumas”, along with an autographed copy of the sheet music by Phil Baxter. Also a copy on tape of the portion of a radio broadcast interview with song writer Phil Baxter and KDDD’s Ken Duke made during the Dumas Dogie Day celebration in June, 1957.

So, you can see that there really is a “Ding Dong Daddy from Dumas” and holding or wearing one of the Daddy pins gives the owner an attitude of being a part of the great heritage of the Panhandle of Dumas, Texas.

*Except courtesy of “Our Town – Dumas” by Jay B. Funk.*