

# HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

July 9<sup>th</sup> 2015

**Members Present:** Tom Speir, Richard Magrill, Joe Hudson, Rose Mary Magrill, Barbara Judkins, Ann Brannon, Thomas Richardson, Jean Birmingham, Gail K. Beil, Carroll G. Fletcher, and Robert Wood.

**Visitor Present:** Mary Hendrycks, president of board of Marshall Depot Museum.

### I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, as acting chair, called the meeting to order on Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 1:35 p.m. at the Blake House of the Starr Home State Historic Site. He expressed appreciation to Barbara Judkins, site manager, for her gracious hosting while our regular meeting place at the Marshall Visual Arts Center was occupied with a blood drive. (Members also much enjoyed the popsicles!) New members, Joey Hudson and Gail Beil, and visitor, Mary Hendrycks, were introduced. We were especially pleased to see Carrol Fletcher present after a long time during which health problems prevented his attendance. Carrol paid special tribute to Jennifer Larned noting that his association with the family began when her father first came to Marshall as commander of Longhorn Ordinance. He regretted being unable to attend her funeral.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of June 11<sup>th</sup> were approved as distributed.

### III. Treasurer's Report

Tom Speir announced that Elizabeth Bradshaw has agreed to serve as treasurer and that there was \$2,574.03 in the bank account. Ann Brannon reported that she had been unsuccessful in getting the service charges removed from the

bank account. The bank needs a tax number for the account. Rose Mary Magrill and Margaret Agnor are the current signatories on the account. Rose Mary will seek to secure the necessary paperwork to make the transition to the new treasurer and secure a fee-free account; otherwise the commission will seek such an account at a new bank. She will also see what needs to be done to transfer the funds from the Greenwood Cemetery account to the Greenwood Cemetery Association. Tom announced that a \$20 and \$40 contribution had been received in memory of Jennifer Larned.

#### **IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:**

##### **A. Archaeology**

In reference to the Rosenwald Schools project, Tom Speir passed around a group picture in the interior of the Morning Star Elementary School in the Woodlawn community in the 1950s. Robert Woods had secured the picture from Oliver Hurd. Robert believes Mr. Hurd also has a photograph of the exterior and will try to secure a copy of it as well. The Rosenwald Schools served African-Americans in the days before desegregation. The Texas Historical Commission wants to compile a list of the schools and their locations throughout the state and are beginning their efforts by asking our commission to work on the project. Austin has supplied the names of the schools in our county but wants us to report the locations.

Tom also shared the Texas Archeology Month flyer, calling attention to the information on ordering brochures for this annual observation.

##### **B. Archives**

No report.

##### **C. Cemeteries**

Thomas Richardson reported on James Mizell, long-time caretaker at the Hallsville Cemetery, his funeral, and his interesting and long involvement in

Hallsville. Ann Brannon reported that two markers at the Greenwood Cemetery need resetting. Regarding Greenwood Cemetery bank account held by the commission *see III. above.*

#### **D. Education**

Tom Speir reported on the success of the booth at the Region 7 Education Service Center in Kilgore. There were some 175 social studies teachers from East Texas at the meeting. He and Barbara Judkins talked with thirty of them and handed out four hundred pieces of literature regarding our county's history and historical attractions. Tom has done a follow-up e-mail to those with whom they made contact and we hope to have increased visitation at the Starr Home and other sites.

Of special note in regard to this effort: we received an email from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) asking for details on how we did the Region 7 Social Studies Summit presentation. The THC intends to present it at a Fall Workshop at the Bullock State History Museum. Their goal is to encourage other county historical commissions to work with their regional Education Services Center (ESC) using us as an example. The workshop will be held on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

In continuing efforts of the Education Committee to build relationships with county ISDs, Barbara Judkins reported that her meeting with Superintendent Dunlap of the Hallsville ISD was well-received. She hopes to hear back. She noted that he seemed pleased that field trips to the Starr Home would be free-admission. If we can get them to Marshall, we will hope to get them to other venues as well. Tom noted that contacts with other county ISDs have been made and are being pursued.

Regarding the projected work toward restarting the history fair in the Marshall ISD, Carol Fletcher reminded the commission of the work of Ruth Briggs at the History Museum who for years helped many students with their projects. She's still there. Sharon Dews at MISD has offered her services in helping to restart the history fair.

## **E. Historical Markers**

Tom Speir and Gail Beil attended the Historical Marker workshop in Gladewater. Tom passed around information from the workshop. Only 165 markers will be awarded for this year. We have 137 markers, but we need to keep working. Barbara Judkins has agreed to work with Gail on the status of pending markers. Gail will have a health procedure on July 31<sup>st</sup> (back problems).

Gail reported that the three markers related to Wiley College are scheduled for dedication in October. However, there has not yet been a decision at East Texas Baptist University as to where their two markers are to be located and consequently no time set for their dedication. There will be two markers related to Coach “Pop” Long and his career to be installed on the walls of the new Wiley student union when its renovation and expansion is completed. Also, still to be finalized is the Boogie Woogie marker.

Gail indicated that possibilities for future markers include: the former RTHL Cities Service Station between First United Methodist Church and the Marshall News Messenger (one of only a few remaining); the newly restored Elks Building across from the Wiseman Center; and the Black business district on Wellington.

The Bethel Campground marker at Elysian Fields has been approved.

Tom reported that he, Richard Magrill, and Rose Mary Magrill had attended the dedication of the Piney Cemetery marker north of Harleton on June 13<sup>th</sup>. This representation from the commission was warmly appreciated.

Tom noted that there would be a markers and heritage webinar at 2 p.m. on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

There was further discussion of the Stagecoach Road marker. We still need to explore a more protected site and mounting for this marker. Tom Speir showed a picture of a marker on a ground-mounted concrete slab. Land for a turnout will be needed. Robert Wood will work on finding a possible donor for a site and report to our next meeting. Gail Beil is also talking with someone who is interested in helping. There are area residents trying to help preserve road. Spray-painting on

the deep banks of the road is a problem. It is the depth of these banks that make the road so historic because its early traffic carved the roadbed into soil.

#### **F. History Museum**

Jean Birmingham indicated that she had heard that the summer camp at the museum went very well. Carrol Fletcher said that he thinks the county will be well-pleased when the military section of the museum is opened in Memorial City Hall.

#### **G. Oral History**

Tom Speir stressed that there is still a need for work in the area of oral history, but no one has come forward to spearhead efforts.

#### **H. Preservation**

Tom reported that Sarah O'Brien is planning a meeting to get Main Street back in operation.

#### **I. Publications**

Richard Magrill reported that he is hoping to get the texts of our more recent markers in machine-readable form from THC. He has scanned the 98 texts listed in our existing brochure which leaves us needing the 39 texts for the more recent markers.

#### **K. Goals**

Tom Speir reported on his meeting with Charlie Nennengier, the county's IT person, who indicated his willingness to set up a webpage for the commission provided we can supply him with material in digital form. We can have one photograph and then later add a series of pictures (i.e. a slideshow that represents all the areas of the county). Tom believes we will need an IT Committee to develop these materials.

## **L. Annual Preservation Awards**

Jean Birmingham and Tom Speir announced their nominations for the commission's annual awards: the Max Lale Award for Historic Preservation nominee is Jennifer Larned; the Marjorie Perkins Outstanding Volunteer of the Year nominee is Ruth Briggs, a long-time worker at the research center in the county museum; and the Harrison County Historical Commission Award of Merit nominee is Richard Magrill. The awards have been printed and are in Judge Taylor's office for signatures.

## **V. Special Reports**

### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

No report.

### **B. T & P Depot Museum**

Robert Wood reported that Mary Hendrycks is the new president. Robert and Mary were pleased to report that the Museum has employed Laura Perry to work in the gift shop. The full slate of new officers at the museum includes in addition to Mary as president the following: Cindy Leleko, vice president; Judi Ware, recording secretary; and Terrell Hoffmeister, treasurer. Mary invited all present for sandwiches following the museum board's meeting on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **C. Starr Home**

Barbara Judkins announced the completion of the ADA compliant sidewalk over Travis Street to the gazebo. More landscaping is in the offing. The home is moving along with the service wing restoration. This addition to the site's public tour will deepen the understanding of the whole picture of the life and work of those connected with the home. There will be folks from THC in town for a visit later this month. The good news is that the home has doubled its attendance since last year. However, it still has the lowest attendance of any site in the state. Barbara is developing a whole new slate of projects for next year.

#### **D. Michelson Museum of Art**

Tom Speir noted the announcement in today's Marshall News Messenger of the opening this evening of the MAXAM collection of Spanish painting at the museum. This exhibit is being sponsored by Rio Ammunition of Marshall to commemorate the opening of their new plant in the county.

#### **E. Historic Designation of Downtown Marshall**

Although no work is currently being done toward the historic designation of downtown Marshall, we hope that it can be resumed at some point. Carroll Fletcher note that Marshall is an "All American City" thanks in part to the work of Christine Anderson and expressed the hope that this status might help with the historic designation.

#### **F. Historic Landmark Preservation Board**

No report.

### **VI. Other**

**Annual Luncheon Panel Discussion.** There was discussion of having an annual luncheon where a panel of folks would speak about the Harrison County community. Gail Beil suggested this activity to build on the success of the panel held in connection with the traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian last fall. Jean Birmingham indicated that the Education Committee of the museum is already planning something similar. Barbara Judkins will bring up the subject at the museum roundtable meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> with the idea that the event could be jointly planned by all the museums. She will brief us on the results at our August meeting.

### **VII. Administrative**

**Historic Metal Truss Bridges.** Texas Department of Transportation wants us to know of its project related to historic metal truss bridges that are still open to vehicular traffic. The commission noted that there is a metal truss bridge on Old U.S. 80 near Hallsville, but it is no longer open to traffic. Thomas Richardson and Tom Speir will photograph the bridge.

**Office Arrangements.** We now have a phone, computer, and voice-mail. (Phone number is 903-935-8417; you may use either of the following e-mail addresses: [thomassp@co.harrison.tx.us](mailto:thomassp@co.harrison.tx.us) or [hchc@co.harrison.tx.us](mailto:hchc@co.harrison.tx.us).)

**Commission Appointments.** Appointments to the historical commission by the county commission were rescheduled for this Monday (July 13<sup>th</sup>).

**Organizations in Which the Commission Holds Memberships.** Renewals of all memberships were authorized.

**Civil War Re-enactment.** Ten thousand participants are expected at Maple Springs Farm near Hallsville, September 17<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be August 13<sup>th</sup> at the Depot. The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

**Submitted by Richard Magrill**