

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 9th 2017

The Harrison County Historical Commission (HCHC) is the county agency in Harrison County, Texas for historic preservation. Its mission is to assist the commissioners' court and the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in the preservation of our county's historical and cultural resources and to protect and preserve the county's historic and pre-historic resources for the use, education, enjoyment and economic benefit of present and future generations.

Members Present: Tom Speir, Richard Magrill, Rose Mary Magrill, Ann Brannon, Barbara Judkins, Marty Vaughan, Jean Birmingham, Thomas Richardson, Robert Wood, and Bill T. Whitis.

Visitor Present: None.

Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on March 9th 2017 at 1:31 p.m. in the conference room of the Marshall Depot Museum and welcomed all to the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of February 9th 2017 were approved as distributed.

III. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Elizabeth Bradshaw, Tom Speir reported on the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission accounts. The statements showed the following:

Brokerage account	\$ 5,520.28
Certificate of deposit	3,300.00
Certificate of deposit	7,075.12
Greenwood Cemetery Fund	13,423.67
Friends of the HCHC Fund	4,191.71

Tom also reported that we have spent \$738 of the \$3,000 included in the county budget for the new fiscal year running from October 2016 to September of 2017, leaving a balance of \$2,262.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Tom Speir reported that he had been unsuccessful in his efforts to contact Robert Sherman, the property owner, with regard to recording as archeological sites the several springs located on the old Rosborough Springs property.

He noted that work continues on the archeological site in Marion County at the Union Missionary Baptist Church in Jefferson. Tom and Robert Wood have been helping our neighboring county with the work there.

Ann Brannon and Tom got permission through Gail Beil from the City of Marshall to investigate the excavation hole in front of Memorial City Hall. Tom showed photos of their findings and passed around a fragment thought to be representative of the original bricks paving the 1901 Courthouse Square (note: the current bricks on the surface are not the originals).

Tom reminded us that the 24th Annual Texas Archeology Conference convenes at the University of Texas at Tyler on April 29th.

The issues of the *Journal of Northeast Texas Archeology* authorized for purchase at the last meeting have been secured for addition to the commission's archives.

B. Archives

Tom Speir reported that Tony Crosby came by the office on February 21st and helped with filing in the archives for a second time. His assistance is much appreciated.

C. Cemeteries

Bill Whitis presented his report of investigations into the cemeteries of Harrison County during the month of February. He expressed warm appreciation for the assistance of Thomas Richardson regarding visits to some of the cemeteries in the Hallsville area. The report is given below:

MARCH 2017 CEMETERY REPORT

BY BILL T. WHITIS

*The following is an account of actions recorded
since the previous meeting.*

On February 11th, Thomas Richardson took me to document Kimberling Cemetery in Hallsville southwest of the intersection of FM 450 and FM 968 on Margie Bush Road. There are at least six burials located here a few feet from the road. It was later discovered that this family includes the 4th or 5th great grandparents of Inez Hatley Hughes. A nephew of hers visited the site about a week later and removed a large amount of brush, stickers, and dead trees making the site more accessible.

That same day, Thomas took me to a second Friendship Cemetery located north of Hallsville where there are at least 12 burials off Nelson Road. The site was an Eagle Scout project of Zachary Spraggins, Boy Scout Troop 226, in 2010 as noted by a small brass plaque found on a wooden sign in one corner.

While in Hallsville, I also visited Hallsville Cemetery, as well as the Pace Memorial Gardens, Mason Springs, Rose Hill, Spring Hill, Bucksville, and Muckelville cemeteries.

Muckelville Cemetery has had a massive cleanup since my last visit; it was previously extremely overgrown with briar patches and pine trees and is now an open and walkable site. I was able to add seven new names and by observing sunken rectangular spots in rows, I noted there are around twenty more possible burials.

On February 12th, I found a second Taylor Cemetery located near where Cooks Road turns into Red Oak Road south of I-20 with burials starting around 1882 and going through 2015. The property owner, Roby Lee Whittaker, also owns the property to the west of there where Red Oak Cemetery is located. He gave us a copy of the plat of his property showing where Taylor Cemetery is located, and he says the family asks for access once a year to bush hog the site — he is certain there are more burials there where temporary markers once were which are now unmarked. Forty-four burials were recorded from the visible markers.

February 18th, I visited both of the Pope City cemeteries. I received phone calls from Peoples Funeral Home about a family member concerned that there was neglect and damage done at the African American cemetery located outside and behind the fenced in church cemetery. Upon visiting, I actually found the cemetery in the back in better condition than any previous visit. I was able to add eighteen new

names and photographed twenty new markers. While in the area, I also checked on Gainesville/ Hunters Cemetery where a recent cleanup had occurred and I added ten new names and headstone photos.

I attempted again to locate Batts Cemetery off Owens Corner Road in this area, but was unable to find its location. I have contacted local funeral homes, but none have either been able or willing to give me information on how to gain access to it. If anyone has contact information, I would like to record the 60+ burials there.

February 25th, I revisited Kimberling to document the cleanup, then went on to visit Pleasant Hill, Dollahite, Golden Hill, Gum Springs, New Prospect and Ashland cemeteries. Ashland is noted in some of our printed records as being in Harrison County, but it is actually in Upshur County — it is also where my great great grandfather William Thomas Whitis and many of his family members are buried.

I had never visited Gum Springs Cemetery before, but was able to add ten names and added about thirty headstone photos to the online database Findagrave.com.

In all, I added over 100 names to the online database, photographed about 175 new headstones, and added 3 new cemeteries to the Findagrave website and Texas Historical Commission state atlas.

Cemetery Report Addendum:

On March 2nd, a Facebook page called 'Traces of Texas' posted a photo of Alice Tittle, the nursemaid for Claudia Taylor. Alice is credited with giving Claudia her nickname, often saying Claudia was "as purty as a lady bird". Claudia is known more often now as Ladybird Johnson, wife of 36th President Lyndon Baines Johnson. Alice's simple marker is located in Antioch Cemetery, near her parents Catherine and Guy Shaw. Her father Guy fought in the Civil War as a Confederate soldier.

Alice's husband Walter Tittle is buried in the African American Andrews Cemetery located behind the more visible Andrews Cemetery just south of Ladybird's childhood home on FM 43. When I contacted the Andrews Cemetery Association about the smaller cemetery located behind their property about why the two cemeteries shared no common entrance, I was told the two property owners had nothing to do with one another. The 2nd cemetery is accessible from the path and gate just southeast of the larger cemetery.

I am also working with Google Maps to create an online map to all of the cemeteries in the county. We will have two versions, including a map for the general public that does not include some cemeteries where the property owners do not want visitors on their land.

Tom Speir reported that he had spoken with Bonnie Strauss about the work on the Wiley Cemetery. Students are cleaning up the cemetery in preparation for Founder's Week. They plan to add a "flowering cross" for use during Easter. The cemetery marker is expected to be restored as a part of the current Eagle Scout project by Logan Jamison-Hatch.

Tom reported that he had a meeting with Sheriff Tom McCool and gave him a folder containing information relative to cemeteries, including laws and stipulations for access. Sheriff McCool expressed his appreciation for the support of the commission as he interacts with the public. Tom also asked the Sheriff to request that his men keep an eye on the various cemeteries as they travel about the county.

Jeff Thompson and Ann Brannon are pursuing the repair work at Greenwood Cemetery in Marshall. Ann reported that they will have the work done in phases and that they should have a report on phase I next month.

Rose Mary Magrill reminded the commission of Ewing Chapel Cemetery Day which will be held on April 1st at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Marshall. All the members of the commission are invited. The program will be on Rosborough Springs.

Bill Whitis noted that someone has added online a new cemetery called Hagerty. He asked for the coordinates of its location but what he was supplied is in the middle of a pond.

Barbara Judkins addressed the subject of this year's cemetery tour and/or tours. The commission expressed the desire that over time the tours include all parts of the county and not just cemeteries in the City of Marshall. Barbara and Bill Whitis will get together and recommend the venues for this year's tours.

D. Education

Tom Speir reported that there will be a meeting this coming Monday, March 13th to begin planning for the History Fair for this coming school year. He asked Sharon Dews to contact the National History Day (NHD) organization. She contacted Stephen S. Cure, CEO and Director of Education of the Texas State Historical Association expressing our hope to affiliate with NHD and also the desire to organize a chapter of Junior Historians. She also asked if the commission could come into the NHD competition as a bi-district and send participants to the regional level. In response, she learned that by about six miles the Marshall Independent School District (MISD) and comes into the region hosted by Texas A&M

University at Texarkana, where Dr. Craig Nakashian is the regional coordinator. Stephen Cure assured her that our History Fair could serve as a local contest and advance entries to the regional contest. He also assured her that NHD would keep all of the county ISDs together as far as attending regional contests, but he did encourage us to focus our efforts northward as the dividing line between the area hosted by Stephen F. Austin University and Texas A&M University at Texarkana is I-20 which includes all county ISDs except Elysian Fields. (The History Fair Committee is composed of Sharon Dews, Becky Palmer, Barbara Judkins, Elizabeth Bradshaw, and Gail Beil.)

E. Historical Markers

Tom Speir noted that Gail Beil has been working very hard on the James Farmer marker dedication but the text has not yet been finalized. For the dedication, it may well prove necessary to use a mock-up of the marker, assuming that the text can be finalized in time.

Tom Speir reported that this year Logan Jamison-Hatch is refurbishing county historical markers as his Eagle Scout project continuing the work begun last year by Ty Weekly. He needs to secure a battery-powered Dremel tool for final touches. Tom has located the tool and reports that we can secure it through the county purchasing system. The commission will have the tool purchased.

Tom reported that we are still working on the Stagecoach Trace markers and trying to get them updated. He shared a report from Tracey Mayer:

Howdy Tom, mom and I went for a drive today and found nine Stagecoach Trace markers and tried for eleven. Number 38 has no address so we were blank on that one. Number 25 (the Scottsville Camp and Conference Center) has no signage at all. I spoke with the manager and he said he has been coming there since he was a small child and to his knowledge there has never been one there. I did not go to Marshall Pottery today because I was focusing on the ones out here and my ex-husband went by last week and checked and told me they are there, but he did not check the number. Every single one we saw today was wrong and off by at least one number. I am sending you pics with notes for those places we visited.

Given Tracey's report, it appears that the brochure will have to be redone and that new markers will be needed for the entire Stagecoach Trace.

Tom reported that he will have to ask Gail Beil about the possible historical marker application for the Marshall Regional Medical Center (now Christus-Good

Shepherd Medical Center at Marshall). It was noted that there is already a marker at the center for Kahn Memorial Hospital.

Richard Magrill reported that in a recent walk down South Washington he had noted a brass plaque set in a newly poured curb referencing the New Deal's Works Progress Administration (WPA). He was aware that the WPA had built the old Marshall High School stadium on West Houston Street as well as the Marshall City Park (next to the medical center) but had not been aware of its work on South Washington. Bill Whitis indicated that there were such plaques set into the curbing up and down the street. Richard also noted that he had been taught that the 1940 Marshall High School building was a result of another New Deal entity, the Public Works Administration (PWA). Unlike the WPA, which employed unskilled laborers to put them back to work during the Great Depression, the PWA funded larger projects and employed commercial contractors to erect dams, hospitals, schools, and other infrastructure. Richard indicated that he had checked an on-line listing of WPA and PWA projects and found none listed for Marshall. He suggested that the work of the WPA and PWA in Harrison County might be a subject worth considering for a historical marker.

Tom Speir noted his hope that we might get a marker for Trammels Trace in the county near Pope City. Later in the meeting (*see IV.F. History Museum, Below page 8*) he passed around a map of the Trace showing its route from Nacogdoches County up through Rusk, Panola, Harrison, Marion, Cass, and Bowie counties into Arkansas where it joined the Southwest Trail at Fulton. At the moment, he noted that no existing historical marker mentioning the Trace is actually located on its route and that we could be the first to secure one with that distinction.

Tom also reported that the Stagecoach Road marker is in hands of the installers.

Robert Wood reminded us of the African-American store in the Old Rosenwald School area near Woodlawn. The store was operated by a one-legged man, who, once he had reached the store, took off his artificial leg. This leg and its removability was a fascination for youngsters growing up in the vicinity. A historical marker commemorating the store, the school, and the church would be helpful in preserving the significance of the African-American community in the area. However, we have not spoken with the current property owners, so any marker application will be on hold until they are contacted.

Our approved 2016 marker applications were for Ewing Chapel Cemetery in southwest Harrison County, the Old Elks Building in Marshall, the former Bishop College in Marshall, the former Booker T. Washington School in Elysian Fields, and Temple Emmanu-El Cemetery in Longview Heights.

Applications in process for submission this year include re-submission of those for Young's Mill Pond Spring and the Old Hallsville Bank. In addition we hope to submit completed applications for the Old Cities Service Station building in Marshall, First Presbyterian Church in Waskom, and Oak Hill Baptist Church. Tom is still pursuing getting a marker for the Nadaco Caddo Homeland. This marker would be applied for in the "undertold story" category (which means that THC would fund the cost). Also in this category Tom plans to apply for a marker commemorating the journey of the Hernando Desoto Expedition through the county after Desoto's death as its trek continued under the second in command. Still in the hands of Wiley College is the work on its two possible new markers in memory of Coach "Pop" Long and Dr. Lawrence Nixon.

F. History Museum

Jean Birmingham reported that Memorial City Hall will be completed but not when it was expected. The History Museum was planning on November 11th for the opening of its military exhibits in the renovated building but it appears that date will not be met.

She called attention to the upcoming genealogy workshop offered by the Museum. Barbara Judkins emphasized that this workshop was in greater depth than the brief event offered recently by the Starr Home. The Museum's workshop will be a two-day event on "Digging into Your Roots," and will be held April 26th - 27th in the 1901 Courthouse.

The Global Connection Exhibit at the Museum in the 1901 Courthouse is scheduled for dedication on April 22nd. This exhibit examines the emigration from other countries into Harrison County and features individual stories to give a face to the different cultures that contributed to the growth of our state and county. Exhibit panels will also tell the story of the Jewish community in Marshall using the artifacts in the Museum's collection from Temple Moses Montefiore, including the Holy Ark where the scrolls of the Torah were kept. Global Connections is a permanent exhibit located on the first floor elevator lobby in the 1901 Courthouse.

Tom Speir shared a map of Trammel's Trace which he received at the Gary Pinkerton book signing for his *Trammel's Trace: The First Road to Texas from the*

North, Texas A&M University Press, 2016. Tom also shared a list of Harrison County headright surveys where the location of Trammel's Trace is either confirmed or likely. Original grantees referenced in the list include the following: Patrick M. Thomas, F.W. Pugh, Stephen F. Sparks, Joel B. Craine, George Johnson, J.B. Townsend, George Johnson, William T. Weathersby, Josiah Prewitt, Samuel Murphy, Hiram Blossom, Bethany Rogers, John J. Kennedy, Isaac N. Fields, Joseph Fields, Charles P. Herford, William Fields, Joseph Fields, Pennington Lindsey, Elizabeth English, John Patterson, George Martin, Thomas Sanders, Isaac Van Zandt, Crawford Yarbrough, George W. Reynolds, Richard Board, and John F. Ramsdale. This listing can be downloaded at www.tramelstrace.com.

Tom noted that the brochures publicizing other museums and historical sites in the county continue to be picked up at the table provided in connection with the Museum in the 1901 Courthouse.

G. Information Technology

Tom Speir noted that all our minutes continue to be provided on-line on the county website and are up-to-date. He will talk with Carolyn Howard at the Convention and Visitors Bureau to see if they wish to get involved with iTour USA which can provide access to historic sites via the internet. (Elizabeth Bradshaw had located this possibility and suggested we look into its services.)

H. Oral History

Tom Speir indicated that the tapes sent to Legacy Box for duplication are still lost. He shared a letter from Legacy Box which reported that they are searching for the tapes and seeking to resolve the issue. This topic is not dead yet!

I. Preservation

Tom Speir reported on the East Texas Historical Association meeting at the Marshall Visual Arts Center and passed around a book received there on *Walter P. Lane: An Appreciation*.

J. Publications

Tom Speir reported that Audrey Kariel would like to see a reprint of *Cultural Crossroads: Marshall-Harrison County, Texas*. (This booklet was a bi-centennial birthday celebration publication in honor of Sam Houston and was

written by Audrey Kariel.) It was decided that we will ask the Museum to reprint and sell the booklet in connection with the opening of “The Global Connection Exhibit” in the 1901 Courthouse scheduled for April 22nd (*see at IV.F. History Museum above page 8*). If the Museum reprints the booklet, they will sell it at a price of their choosing and the proceeds will go to the Museum. If the Museum decides not to reprint, then we will pay to have the copies made and they will be sold for \$3.00 a piece with the proceeds to come back to the commission. (Note: Thirty copies can be reprinted for a cost of \$84.30 and this number should be sufficient for sale at the event.)

K. Tourism

Tom Speir noted that Carolyn Howard, director for Main Street, Tourism, and Downtown Economic Development, had hoped to be at this meeting but her schedule just did not permit her attendance.

L. Goals

Tom Speir asked if anyone had any new goals to discuss emphasizing that 2017 is here and we need to come up with suggestions.

Barbara Judkins would like for us to consider creating our own history conference. Maybe we could draw in Texas A&M University at Texarkana as well as Wiley College and East Texas Baptist University here in Marshall. One event might be an auxiliary student night with perhaps a spin-off from the History Fair. We could consider holding it in cooperation with the Historic Landmark Preservation Board. Winners in the History Fair competition might be asked to bring their projects, and we could involve local avocational historians. Barbara will put together a proposal.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

Barbara Judkins presented the report on nominations for the annual awards. There were two nominees in each category.

Selected for the *Award of Merit* was the *Harrison County Inmate Work Force*. This award recognizes the efforts and/or contributions of an individual or organization involved in preserving Harrison County’s cultural and historical resources. Gail Beil made this nomination, noting that “without the dedicated work of the ‘Men in Orange’ the cost for much of the restoration and renovation of many of our historic structures in the public domain would be much higher.” Rose

Mary Magrill expressed appreciation for the work which the inmates had done at Ewing Chapel Cemetery; they cleared the new borders on the north, west, and south and helped install the fence marking the property lines. When Tom Speir spoke with Sheriff McCool (*see above IV.C. Cemeteries page 5*), he advised him that this program had been nominated and the Sheriff supported any effort we might make to recognize the inmates work.

Selected for the *Marjorie Perkins Volunteer of the Year Award* was the *Reverend Glenda Clay*. This award recognizes an individual for outstanding volunteer service to historic preservation, downtown revitalization, heritage tourism or community service. It will be presented to Rev. Clay for her work at the Pemberton Heritage Center. Located in the library building of the former Pemberton High School on the campus of Wiley College, the museum contains a priceless collection of memorabilia documenting the work of the school among the African-American community of Marshall. County Commissioner Zephaniah Timmins made this nomination.

Selected for the *Max Lale Award for Historic Preservation* was *Sabine Farms Educational Society, Inc.* This award recognizes an individual, organization, or project that has significantly contributed to the understanding or preservation of Harrison County's cultural and historic resources. Categories include restoration, preservation or rehabilitation projects, non-construction projects such as books, a scholarly paper, presentation, educational or media achievement. The society works to preserve the Sabine Farms site where one of the New Deal's programs sought to improve conditions for African-American farmers who suffered under the conditions brought on by the Great Depression. Helen G. Murray is the contact person for this organization.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

Robert Wood noted that the repaired historical marker has been taken for reinstallation on the Depot grounds near the tracks where people waiting for trains and train passengers can see it. (Its newer replacement is located where it can be viewed in the parking lot outside the Depot grounds.)

C. Starr Home

Barbara Judkins reported that the Starr Home will have story times and crafts next week during the MISD spring break. The Home has seen an increase in visits, she notes, “so tourism in Marshall must be getting better!”

The East Texas Historical Association meeting in Marshall, which Barbara had worked to bring to the city, was a brief affair — in and out in a day. There were eighteen people in attendance. Notices regarding the meeting were not received in a timely fashion preventing any possibility of adequate publicity and community involvement. Barbara suggested that we consider creating our own history conference (*see under IV.L. Goals, above page 10*).

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Tom Speir indicated that Susan Spears and Bonnie Strauss had asked that he announce the Michelson’s new exhibit: “Celestial Siblings: Parallel Landscapes of Earth and Mars.” The exhibit will run from March 2nd through May 27th. The exhibit will highlight the work of Stephen E. Strom, an internationally known astronomer and fine art photographer. The diptych terrestrial images of Earth and Mars are drawn from Dr. Strom’s unique landscape interpretations and invite the viewer to contemplate the role of air, earth, fire, and water in shaping the surfaces of the two planets.

In addition, they wished the commission to be aware that the Michelson is hosting an event, “Exceptional Learners Create,” on May 16th from 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 4:30-6:30 p.m. where there will be a student art show and reception.

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB)

No report.

VI. Other

Nothing to report.

VII. Administrative

Mail. Tom Speir shared a card from the Wharton County Historical Commission about their publication of a two-volume, 850 page, hardbound book: *War Between the States Changed Texas Forever*. The publication is available pre-publication (prior to March 31st) for a cost of \$65 plus \$10 shipping/handling/tax

and delivery is anticipated in April. To order contact Wharton County Historical Commission at whartonchc@yahoo.com.

Harrison County Historical Society. Robert Wood reminded us of the confusion in the public mind between the Harrison County Historical Society which works to preserve the 1901 Courthouse and our Historical Commission which has a broader and different area of responsibility.

Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission. Tom Speir reported that the Friends simplified IRS Form 990 has not been sent in for this year.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be April 13th 2017 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill