

**HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 13<sup>th</sup> 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, Jean Birmingham, Thomas Richardson, Robert Wood, and Gail Beil.

**Visitors Present:** Ralph Newlan, new president of Marshall's Historic Landmarks Preservation Board, and Carolyn Howard, director for Main Street, Tourism, and Downtown Economic Development in Marshall.

**Call to Order**

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on April 13<sup>th</sup> 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 March 9<sup>th</sup> 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	\$ 5,520.75
Certificate of deposit	3,300.00
Certificate of deposit	7,075.12
Greenwood Cemetery Fund	13,424.01
Friends of the HCHC Fund	4,191.82

Tom also reported that we have spent \$769 of the \$3,000 included in the county budget for the fiscal year running from October 2016 to September of 2017, leaving a balance of \$2,231.

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

**A. Archaeology**

Tom Speir shared a *Marshall News Messenger* article on the Marion County archeological work at the Union Missionary Baptist Church in Jefferson. He also reported that he had led a workshop at the Cypress Basin Chapter of Master Naturalists on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. In addition, he has recorded the Cadenhead Archeological Site as 41HS1015. This site is located off Blocker Road and is the location of the historic community of Blocker, Texas.

Tom got a call from Philip Malden, County Precinct Commissioner at Hallsville, regarding someone who was interested in purchasing the old Warren Pony Truss Bridge on Old Highway 80 near Hallsville. The bridge would be removed to another county for addition to a site that is seeking historic structures. The bridge is the property of Harrison County and the county can sell it, but because it is recorded as an archeological site its removal will need to get the approval of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in Austin. Tom indicated that he was prepared to help file the papers to get the THC approval but that he advised that it would not be value-added to the County to pursue the project and Commissioner Malden agreed.

**B. Archives**

Tom Speir reported that there has been no progress in the work of organizing and filing the archives in our office since last month.

**C. Cemeteries**

Tom Speir reported that the Adams Cemetery has received designation as an Historic Texas Cemetery. Bill Whitis sent in his report of investigations into the cemeteries of Harrison County during the month of March. Tom presented the report as follows:

**APRIL 2017 CEMETERY REPORT**

**BY BILL T. WHITIS**

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

Cemetery visits made on —

**March 9<sup>th</sup> :**

**Fairview Cemetery** - New fencing and gate has been installed; the old archway is laying on the ground in the back.

**Marshall Hebrew Cemetery** - New fencing has been installed, and a large amount of brush removed along south fence.

**Greenwood Cemetery** - No visible changes as of this date.

**March 11<sup>th</sup> :**

**Wiley College Cemetery** - I attended the Wiley College Alumni bell-ringing ceremony at the cemetery. Only students were in attendance; no one showed interest in the cemetery and students dispersed after ceremony ended. The college bell was left on its stand, and students in attendance said Wiley maintenance would retrieve the bell at some point. Other cemetery sites visited that day: Minneweather, Scott, Haley, and Amie-Haggerty.

**March 12<sup>th</sup> :**

**Scottsville Cemetery** was visited, no changes were seen. Ann Brannon was on hand and we did a preliminary look at the land behind the home next to/west of the cemetery to see if another smaller cemetery exists behind the home. There is a staircase and gate leading into the woods behind the home along the road to the left, and other people have inquired if I knew about a cemetery located behind the home. Small cement pieces and broken stones and bricks were seen on our first visit; additional work will be done here as weather/heat conditions allow.

**March 25<sup>th</sup> :**

**Greenwood Cemetery** - A tornado went through the county; damage was initially noted at Greenwood Cemetery. Ben Harbor was hired and has done a large amount of cleanup there since then.

**March 26<sup>th</sup> :**

I visited cemeteries along the storm path; no other large damage noted. Those sites visited were: Colonial Gardens (near the explosion at Key Energy), Saint John, Blocker, Crossroads, McKay, Mt. Pleasant, Elysian Fields, Lewis, Old Town, and Hightower. On this day, I also visited Boisseau Cemetery which was located east of Old Town

Cemetery. Also visited after that were Pine Grove COGIC, Strickland Springs, Long Ridge, ending at Marshall Hebrew and Greenwood. I clipped a tree at Greenwood Cemetery growing up next to Shirley Handler's headstone and pruned several other trees around her family's plot and neighboring burials.

**April 7<sup>th</sup> :**

**Lake Margaret Cemetery** was located northeast of Camp Fern where Peggy and Ross Rotzler are interred. Combination lock information to the oilfield gate entrance is being included in our office files.

**April 8<sup>th</sup> :**

**Sherrill-Hamilton Cemetery** was located off Jewell Gooch Rd in Woodlawn with THC guidance.

**April 9<sup>th</sup> :**

**Spring Valley (Springville?) Cemetery** - A cemetery the state identifies as Spring Valley was located northeast of Cave Springs Cemetery on FM 2625 east of Highway 43. A majority of the burials here have been listed as in "Springville" Cemetery on death certificates, with at least two listed as in "Sprinklesville" Cemetery.

**Rock Springs Cemetery** to the south was also visited this day and nine new burials were identified and documented.

**Oakland (Powder Mill) Cemetery** - Ann Brannon found an old newspaper advertisement concerning burial space at Oakland Cemetery, managed by Marshall Furniture Company / W. E. Lancaster, and she emailed me a copy. I had previously inquired with Julia Williams about some of the burials at Powder Mill whose death certificates listed them as being in Oakland Cemetery (she had no knowledge of this), but it appears Oakland may have been another name for Powder Mill, or the two may have shared a border at one time and are now incorporated into one cemetery.

I have leads on about 15 additional cemeteries at this time and am actively pursuing access to them.

Ann Brannon reported that the first/front section at Greenwood Cemetery is still in bad shape as a result of the recent storm damage. Only one toppled monument has been righted. Robert Wood reported that he went out to Greenwood the morning after the storm and there was good publicity regarding the damage and the need for recovery.

Tom Speir passed around a copy of the old advertisement regarding lots at Oakwood Cemetery (now a part of Powder Mill Cemetery) which Ann Brannon had discovered. Robert Wood reported that there is a deed hanging on a wall at Pope City showing the original deed granted to an unnamed black cemetery behind the Pope City Cemetery. He will pursue investigation into the name of the cemetery. Robert will also contact Bill Whitis regarding this possibility.

Ann Brannon presented a check for \$1,110 representing monies which she and Buddy Powers collected for Greenwood Cemetery. She will endorse it and turn it over to the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission for addition to its Greenwood Cemetery Fund.

Rose Mary Magrill reported that in her research she had come across the deed for the St. Mary's Cemetery and has the volume and page number. She will see that this information is forwarded to Bill Whitis.

Ann Brannon commented that the Ewing Chapel Cemetery Day was great and that its presentation on Rosborough Springs was very informative. Rose Mary Magrill and Rutledge McClaran made presentations on the Springs and those present shared memories. Especially appreciated were the memories shared by Fran Smith Hurley representing the period when the Springs were under the ownership of Smith Steel Castings. Rose Mary will send copies of the information she and Rutledge shared to Ann Brannon and to Tom Speir.

#### **D. Education**

Tom Speir reported that letters have been sent to all the Superintendents of the Independent School Districts regarding the county-wide History Fair to be held during the new academic year beginning in August. Regarding the upcoming Region VII Conference of Social Studies Teachers, Sharon Dews will be asked to report on our work in reviving the History Fair program in the county. (The History Fair Committee is composed of Sharon Dews, Becky Palmer, Barbara Judkins, Elizabeth Bradshaw, and Gail Beil.)

#### **E. Historical Markers**

Robert Wood, reporting on the site of the old Rosenwald School at Woodlawn, indicated that he has talked with a Mr. Hurd who is no longer a member of the church in that area and therefore not interested in pursuing a historical marker for it. Robert contacted a current member of the church but has received no response.

Tom Speir reported that Judge Hugh Taylor said the work on the granite base for the Stagecoach Road marker was in the pipeline but he has not heard from the monument company regarding it. He expects it is low down on the monument company's list of work.

Ralph Newlan reported that there was interest in getting the Stagecoach Road put on the National Register of Historic Places. (The Hays County Historical Commission's chair is particularly interested in this possibility.)

Tom Speir reported that we have received the James Farmer marker. It will be dedicated on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Hank Thomas from Atlanta will be in Marshall to dedicate it. Mr. Thomas was only 19 when got on the Freedom Rider bus that was set on fire in Anniston, Alabama a half century ago. Carol Howard arrived at the meeting and reported that the ceremonies for this marker dedication will be held either at the Paramount Theater or the 1901 Courthouse. Gail Beil arrived and indicated that the ceremonies would be held at Telegraph Park, weather permitting. The marker itself will be unveiled at the Paramount Theater location. Tom Speir noted that he had received an email from Rob Hodges who is the Communications Project Coordinator for THC who wants to come and do filming of this dedication. Gail has been trying since January to host a presentation at Wiley at which Hank Thomas would be the speaker but she has been unsuccessful. The Marshall ISD, however, through Superintendent Jerry Gibson has indicated interest in having Mr. Thomas speak at the High School the morning of the dedication. Gail reported that she has arranged with the *Marshall New Messenger* for its Lifestyle page on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April to provide pre-dedication coverage. The Southern Methodist University debate team is coming for the occasion. It was decided that Tom Speir will be the master of ceremonies for the dedication which will start at 5:00 p.m. Gail will introduce the speaker. Representative Chris Paddy is making arrangements for the Legislature to declare May 1<sup>st</sup> as James Farmer Day in the State of Texas. In addition, the City Commission will also issue a proclamation declaring James Farmer Day in Marshall. Following the dedication at Telegraph Park, there will be a reception in the Paramount Theater. Posters are being printed. We will need programs. Printed invitations should be mailed out. Tom will supply a generic list to Gail and Barbara Judkins offered the Blake House for an envelope-stuffing party. (Note: This dedication will precede our next meeting.)

## **F. History Museum**

Jean Birmingham reported that she is setting tomorrow as the deadline for participation in the genealogy worship which the History Museum is to hold April 26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>. Ann Brannon passed around a book, Audrey Daniels Kariel's *The Jewish Story and Memories of Marshall, Texas*, to be given out at the 1901 Courthouse when the Museum dedicates its new Global Connections Exhibit featuring the Ark and other artifacts from Temple Moses Montefiore. This dedication will be on Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 3-6 p.m. with the program starting at 3:30 p.m.

## **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.

## **H. Oral History**

Tom Speir indicated that there is widespread belief in the importance of oral history. We have the equipment now, but we do not have anyone to do the interviewing. We are a member of the Texas Oral History Association. We would prefer an adult over the age of 21 who is willing to do the interviewing. Someone should, he noted, interview Audrey Kariel. He asked us to be on the lookout for someone to meet this need.

## **I. Preservation**

Tom Speir commented on the mis-designated "Old Negro Tenement House" at 307 North Alamo. We were contacted by the current owner, retired Navy Chaplain M. Diggs. Ralph Newlan, new president of the Historic Landmarks Preservation Board, indicated that the City of Marshall has taken the owner to court over the derelict building and that he has 30 days to get permits to show that he is going to work on it. It is too late to get us involved in order to get him more time. It has been worked on in unsatisfactory ways since the late 1990s. Even if Mr. Diggs gets the permits, he does not have the money to work on it. Ralph indicated that the building is not likely to have been a black tenement house given the fact that it is on Alamo. Richard Magrill reported that Margaret Agnor, former Commission chair, had positively stated that it was never a black tenement house. Ralph noted that it would probably take \$25-\$30 thousand just to make the building safe. Whatever its previous uses, he commented:

It is sad to lose another older property but it has been neglected for too long to be able to rescue it. The owner has been to court four times. It is anchored with straps to a tree in the front yard. The property is listed in the names of both Mr. Digg's and his wife. If demolished there will be a lien on the lot. A couple of the windows have unusual patterns. Its fate is between him and the city now. It used to be numbered as 301 Alamo and is now 307. On the Sanborn maps it is always shown as a personal dwelling. Nothing can be done.

Tom will talk with Ralph regarding the county-wide survey listing historic structures which are in need of preservation which the THC has asked the Commission to complete.

#### **J. Publications**

No report.

#### **K. Tourism**

Carolyn Howard, director for Main Street, Tourism, and Downtown Economic Development, shared her excitement about the Farmers Market relocation to the Peter Whetstone Square. It will be opened at this new location on May 13<sup>th</sup> and it will be 50 years old on that date. Market Manager James Fyffe will be honored that day since he has been with the market from the beginning. The market opens at 7:00 a.m. and the ceremony will be held at 9:00 a.m. Market days for 2017 will be from 7:00 a.m. until Noon on Saturdays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. There will be popsicles and watermelon available on May 13<sup>th</sup> and "Get the Scoop" folks will bring ice cream. Music will be provided every Saturday. During the season, there will also be Children's Craft Days (May 13<sup>th</sup>, June 17<sup>th</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, and August 12<sup>th</sup>), a Best Homemade Ice Cream Contest (July 1<sup>st</sup>), and a Best Homemade Pie Contest (August 12<sup>th</sup>). All were urged to attend and share this news with their friends.

#### **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.

#### **M. Annual Preservation Awards**

Tom Speir reported that the awards have been prepared. Their presentation in May needs to be scheduled in cooperation with the Historic Landmarks

Preservation Board. Carolyn Howard indicated that Marshall Main Street would like to join in this event. She suggested that there could be a reception with refreshments at Main Street Marshall following the formal presentations in the court room at the 1901 Courthouse. On motion, purchase of the awards from Smart Advertising was authorized.

**Recess/Recess Out.** Due to time constraints, the Commission recessed for thirteen minutes for a meeting of the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission. Ann Brannon called the Friends to order and indicated that approval of the minutes would be postponed to a later date. There was no old business. New business consisted of accepting the resignation of Joseph Hudson, which was accepted. Ann Brannon was elected as the new chair. Bill Whitis was elected as the new vice chair. Recess was declared out and the Commission reconvened.

## **V. Special Reports**

### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

No report.

### **B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum**

Robert Wood reported that the Marshall Depot is in line for upgrades from AmTrak in relation to the Americans with Disabilities Act. The museum was delighted to receive a grant from Union Pacific for use in its educational programs with young people. Richard Magrill spoke about a recent first-time visit which he and Rose Mary Magrill made to the Depot Museum. They both thought that its displays were particularly well done and that the museum would make an excellent place to take visitors to the city and to help them understand the importance of the T&P Railroad in the development of Marshall. Robert Wood indicated that there are a wealth of archival materials available in the museum's collection and there is a lot of work being done on the archives. The Depot Museum has a steady stream of visitors and attendance has increased in recent years due to our mutual promotion of the various historic sites in the county.

### **C. Starr Home**

Barbara Judkins reported that the Starr Home is working on the restoration of the back part of the house. It is seeing an increase in reservations for tours. Barbara did a presentation to the Marshall ISD STEM academy yesterday.

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

Tom Speir shared with the Commission two upcoming events at the Michelson. The first is “A Fusion of Art and Astronomy: A Three Part Story” which will be by Dr. Stephen E. Strom, an internationally known astronomer and fine art photographer. This event will take place on April 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. The second is the Michelson’s annual benefit. Entitled “And they’re off! Michelson Museum of Art’s Race for the Arts,” this event is a Kentucky Derby Party on May 6<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. The cost is \$75 per person (Churchill Downs Attire Optional!) and will involve cocktails, the race itself, dinner, and a silent auction.

### **E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB)**

Ralph Newland introduced himself as the new chair of the HLPB. (Tony Crosby is now the vice-chair.) Ralph will be working with Tom Speir on arranging the joint awards ceremony in May. The HLPB is working on a National Register historic survey for downtown Marshall. Tom expressed the Commission’s happiness in having Ralph here to give us a report and contribute to our discussion. Gail Beil reported that she has developed a walking tour of downtown.

## **VI. Other**

Nothing to report.

## **VII. Administrative**

**June Meeting.** Tom Speir noted that he will be unavailable for our June meeting and alerted Robert Wood that he will have to preside.

**Mail.** Tom reported that a letter has been received announcing the resignation of Joseph Hudson from the Commission. Joey expressed his appreciation for our work and for his opportunity of participating in it. A Newsletter from the History Musuem has been received. The American State and Local History Association has announced its meeting in Austin this fall. *A Journey*

*through Texas and Time, 100 Years of Being a State Agency* has been received from the Texas Department of Transportation. The quarterly Texas Archeology Newsletter has provided information on this summer's archeology school.

**Facebook Page.** Tom mentioned once again the need for new photos for our Facebook page and encouraged all present to send them to him.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be May 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

**Submitted by Richard Magrill**