

# HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

May 11<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, Marty Vaughan, Bill T. Whitis, and Gail Beil.

**Visitor Present:** Gary Endsley, Director of the Collins Academy: Center for Educational Development and Support.

### Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on May 11<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 April 13<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	14,534.35
Friends of the HCHC Fund	4,191.92

Tom also reported that we have spent \$1,188 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 \$1,812.

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

**A. Archaeology**

Tom Speir reported that he had attempted but not been able to locate Montvale Springs near Harleton. Rose Mary Magrill had found a reference to it in *Springs of Texas, Vol. I*, by Gunnar Brune. He noted that the annual conference of the Texas Archeology Association was held last month. He also reported on the work being done at the Jefferson Ordnance site.

**B. Archives**

Tom Speir reported that there has been nothing special accomplished in the Commission's archives since the last meeting. He continues to try to stay on top of filing of materials as they come in but a backlog still remains.

**C. Cemeteries**

Bill Whitis presented his report of investigations into the cemeteries of Harrison County during the month of April as follows:

**MAY 2017 CEMETERY REPORT**

**BY BILL T. WHITIS**

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

**April 17th:**

**McJohnson Cemetery** - During a visit I observed that more clearing along the property edges has been made. Seventeen previously unseen markers have been photographed, including eight new names not on record before.

**April 27th:**

**Genealogical Workshop** - I participated in the Harrison County Historical Museum's second annual 'Digging into your Roots' genealogical workshop. I helped participants find family burial sites in Harrison and

Marion county as well as photos of relatives some registrants had never seen before using Ancestry.com and Findagrave.com.

**April 29th:**

***Davis Cemetery (3)*** - I located and documented a third Davis Cemetery on a road behind Fugler's Grocery; burials began in 2006.

**May 2nd:**

***Concord Cemetery*** - I returned to Concord Cemetery and located two burials that a participant in the Museum's genealogical workshop had alerted me to that were not included in the online record. I photographed the burials, added GPS coordinates, and did some Ancestry.com research to link various relatives on the participant's behalf.

***Yates Cemetery*** - I also visited Yates Cemetery and added two new names not on public record and photographed seven new markers.

**May 5th:**

***Clements Cemetery*** - Jenny McWilliams with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) had a query about a Clements Cemetery located in the northwest area of the county and I went to find this cemetery based on the information she provided. I discovered that Clements Cemetery sits on top of a hill and shares a central fence border with Old Lagrone Cemetery northwest of LaGrone's Chapel (and it's modern day known cemetery) forming a chevron pattern pointing to the east. Old LaGrone and Clements are two different cemeteries with separate gates and fence lines.

Notable among the markers here are headstones for two members of the World Health Organization (WHO) who specialized in HIV research. They were on their way to a conference in Geneva, Switzerland when then their plane crashed in Nova Scotia, Canada. They are Jonathan Max Mann, born in Boston, and his wife, Mary Lou *Clements* Mann, who was born in Longview (her father is buried here as well). Mary was a professor at John Hopkins University and served as a consultant to eradicate smallpox in India with the WHO. I have been unable to verify if their actual remains are interred here, but markers for both of them are located in the Clements side of the cemetery.

***Macedonia Cemetery*** - Work continues on the Macedonia Cemetery burial plots map; I plan to have them a working copy for their Memorial Day cleanup so members can help identify plots with no markers.

I currently have leads on about 14 additional cemeteries and am still pursuing access to all of them.

Ann Brannon reported that Greenwood Cemetery looks much better. The City of Marshall has done what was needed.

#### **D. Education**

Tom Speir reported that work on in-service opportunities for teachers this fall to get them involved in the history fair has begun. For the upcoming meeting of the Region VII Conference of Social Studies Teachers, Sharon Dews is working on a power point presentation detailing our revival of a history fair in the Marshall Independent School District. We will hand out brochures at the table for the various museums and historical sites in Harrison County. This meeting will be on Monday June 19<sup>th</sup>. We may already have enough packets, but we may need to check and add brochures to some packets.

(The History Fair Committee is composed of Sharon Dews, Becky Palmer, Barbara Judkins, Elizabeth Bradshaw, and Gail Beil.)

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

The dedication of the James Farmer Historical Marker went well. The next marker we are working on is for Marshall the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie. We should have the completed text available soon. It is hoped that some kind of mural can be erected behind the marker. The marker will be erected at the Depot because of the connection of Boogie Woogie with railroad workers and it needs to be located where it can be seen when the Depot is closed.

Last year we offered to host a historical marker workshop for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) . We are on the list for one this year on July 25<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. at the Marshall Visual Arts Center. Barbara Judkins noted that there is a screen and projector available there. The THC has asked if we could provide some refreshments. There will be pre-registration but anyone can show up. Tom will notify all who have inquired.

During his visit for the dedication of the James Farmer Marker, Hank Thomas autographed some photos. These are to be offered to the History Museum as the first option, otherwise they will be framed and hung in the Commission's office.

Gail Beil noted that there is an incipient movement to raise funds to erect a statue of James Farmer on the 1901 Courthouse grounds. She is also considering working on a marker for the black economic district in downtown Marshall. The City would have to fund its costs or it might fall in the category of an untold story for which the THC would bear the costs.

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

Tom Speir, on behalf of the History Museum, distributed copies of Audrey Daniels Kariel's *The Jewish Story and Memories of Marshall, Texas*. He also shared an insert from the *Marshall News Messenger* article on the dedication of the Museum's Global Connections Exhibit.

#### **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 reported at our last meeting that there is widespread belief in the importance of oral history and that we have the equipment now but do not have anyone to do the interviewing. He noted that we are a member of the Texas Oral History Association and that we would prefer an adult over the age of 21 who is willing to do the interviewing. At that meeting, he asked us to be on the lookout for someone to meet this need. He has not heard from anyone!

Tom passed around business cards from Monica Brown, Manager of Communications & Business Development for the Texas Veterans Land Board, and shared brochures on the Land Board's "Voices of Veterans" program. This program emphasizes that "Every Veteran has a story to tell" and invites Texas Veterans to "tell us yours." Interviews can be conducted in person or by telephone.

Gail Beil volunteered to do an oral history interview with Jean Birmingham.

#### **I. Preservation**

Tom Speir noted that 302 South Grove (the Pope-McGee House) is for sale and that there has been an inquiry about moving the house from its present site. Barbara Judkins has asked that the THC buy the lot (but not the house) where a text panel historical marker could then be erected. The question was raised as to

whether the Historic Landmarks Preservation Board could stop the moving of the historic house out of the city.

Tom reported that he had received an email from Stephen McFarland of the Marshall Forward Movement asking about the old Texas & Pacific Hospital building. The current owners want to unload it. There is about \$20,000 in back taxes owed on the property.

Gary Endsley, Director of the Collins Academy: Center for Educational Development and Support, gave a report on the Starr Ranch property on Caddo Lake situated within the National Wildlife Refuge. There is currently no power line to the building and there is also no well. In the last six months the Wildlife Refuge has indicated that it wants to tear down the building which is in bad repair and a danger to those who might be tempted to enter it. Gary is head of a group of Friends who would like to preserve it in some form. (They are now looking at not trying to restore it due to asbestos and lead paint but wonder if it could be converted into a kind of pavilion.) Barbara Judkins noted that the Starr Ranch was once owned by the Starr Family who bought the property from Hobart Key. Starr Ditch was dug so that Amery Starr could transport his cattle down the Red River from Caddo Lake. About five miles from the front gate of the Wildlife Refuge, "it is a beautiful site and a really nice access point to Caddo Lake," Barbara reported, adding that it was a site of Native American habitation as well.

Gary would like to work in cooperation with us on possibly preserving the site in some manner. He has a benefactor who wants a budget on what it would cost to restore it. Gail Beil suggested the Harrison County Inmate Work Force might be enlisted to help in any restoration. Abatement of the lead paint and asbestos hazards would have to be done with care and he does not expect any Federal funds to be available. There is talk about a text panel historical marker being erected. The main house is some 670 square feet and there is a falling down detached kitchen. Officials say that fires in the fireplace cannot be allowed because it is in a National Wildlife Refuge.

It was agreed that Tom would schedule a time for interested members of the Commission to get out there with Ralph Newlan and Tony Crosby of the Historic Landmarks Preservation Board. Gail Beil volunteered to provide a picnic lunch and Barbara Judkins dessert. [Note: on the following Thursday May 19<sup>th</sup> commission members Tom Speirs, Richard Magrill, Rose Mary Magrill, Barbara Judkins, Robert Woods, Marty Vaughan, Thomas Richardson, and Sharon Dews

gathered with Ralph Newlan and Gary Endsley at the Refuge office from whence we went to the site for an inspection.]

#### **J. Publications**

No report.

#### **K. Tourism**

Tom Speir reminded the Commission that the Farmers Market opens its fiftieth year in Marshall this coming Saturday now in its new location in Peter Whetstone Square.

#### **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 noted that the Commission's annual awards will be jointly presented with the HLPB awards at 2 p.m. in the court room of the 1901 Courthouse on Sunday May 21<sup>st</sup>. There will be a reception at the Convention and Visitors Bureau following.

### **V. Special Reports**

#### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

No report.

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

Robert Wood sent an email reporting that work is progressing slowly but on schedule to pour concrete for handicapped access to the Depot.

#### **C. Starr Home**

Barbara Judkins reported that the Starr Home had recently participated in a very successful "historic sites free day." The restoration work in the kitchen continues to progress well. In fact, the home now has a working, wood-burning stove available for installation.

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

Bonnie Strauss sent an email announcing that the Michelson is offering free classes for young children, young teens, and adults painting with children. These classes are scheduled for June and July. All supplies will be furnished. The Michelson pursues the best teachers (and pays them a little...not even close to their worth!). She expressed her thanks for all who supported their Kentucky Derby fundraiser. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, they are sponsoring their first student art show for special learners.

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

Tom Speir noted that Ralph Newlan was not able to be present but that together they are working on the awards presentation.

#### **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 the fall 2016 (vol. 54) edition of the *East Texas Historical Journal* had just arrived. This issue contains an article (pages 22-52) by Brandon Jett, “‘Let Us Be Law Abiding Citizens:’ Mob Violence and the Local Response in Harrison County, Texas, 1890-1925” which deals with the “phenomenon of lynching.”

**Public Address System.** Tom believes that the Commission needs to purchase its own public address system. He asks that we look online at available systems, think about them, and give him input.

**Facebook Page.** Tom mentioned once again the need for new photos for our Facebook page and encouraged all present to send them to him. He noted that he had not yet received copies of the photos done by the Great Debaters of Wiley College at the James Farmer Historical Marker Dedication.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be June 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

**Submitted by Richard Magrill**