

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 10th 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: Robert Wood, Richard Magrill, Rose Mary Magrill, Bill T. Whitis, Marty Vaughan, Gail Beil, Jean Birmingham, and Barbara Judkins.

Visitors Present: Reynaldo Jaudres and Alan Loudermilk of the Ginnochio Hotel and Harold M. Hoffmeister, Treasurer of the T&P Depot Museum.

Call to Order

Robert Wood, vice chair, called the meeting to order on August 10th 2017 at 1:29 p.m. in the conference room of the T&P Depot Museum and welcomed all to the meeting. He reported that Tom Speir, chair, could not make this meeting due to demands related to his wife's recovery from recent surgery.

Robert led in a moment of prayer for the family of Will Brannon, a nephew of Commission Member Ann Brannon. Will and two other Hallsville Boy Scouts died as a result of an electrical/boating accident on Lake of the Pines last weekend.

Robert read a letter from Elizabeth Bradshaw submitting her resignation from the Commission and as its treasurer. Bill Whitis has volunteered to serve as the treasurer. (*Note:* Elizabeth will also need to be replaced as a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission and its treasurer.)

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of July 13th 2017 were approved as distributed.

III. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Elizabeth Bradshaw, Robert shared the bank statements of 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	14,535.45
Friends of the HCHC Fund	2,542.12

Due to Tom's absence there was no update on the records of the commission which showed that through June 30th we had spent \$1,656 of the \$3,000 included in the county budget for the fiscal year running from October 2016 through September of 2017, leaving a balance of \$1,344.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

No report.

B. Archives

Due to Tom Speir's absence there was no report but there is still much to be done in getting the archives of the Commission in good order.

C. Cemeteries

Bill Whitis summarized his report for August which is given in full below:

AUGUST 2017 CEMETERY REPORT

BY BILL T. WHITIS

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

Cemetery Visits: Visits made since the previous meeting: Scott, Antioch, Restland, Union Chapel, Taylor, Scratcheye, New Zion, Davis, Liberty (Harleton), County Line Baptist Church, Smyrna, Center, and Powder Mill.

Historical Markers/Designations Workshops: On July 25th, we sponsored a workshop presented by the Texas Historic Commission (THC) for State Historical Markers at the Marshall Visual Arts Center. The pre-registration brought us 20-plus participants, but the actual turnout was well over 40 and included people from several surrounding counties. This turnout prompted us to contact the THC to schedule another workshop this fall for people looking for information on Texas Historic Cemetery Designations. This new workshop will happen on October 24th at 1:30 pm., also at the Visual Arts Center.

From this initial workshop, we learned that a representative from the Woodlawn Cemetery has an interest in both types of historical marker designations. Audrey Kariel is also working on the Historic Cemetery designation for Marshall Hebrew Cemetery.

Newspaper Articles Begun: On July 30th, my first in a series of articles titled "Cultivating our Roots" was published in the *Marshall News Messenger*. These articles will cover the over 200 cemeteries in our county and are currently scheduled to be published once a month. The first article was based on data from Antioch Cemetery; no one at the church wanted to participate in the article. One result from the article was being contacted by a family member in south Texas wishing to get a headstone placed for his father Willie Odell Davis buried at Antioch. Willie's temporary marker is missing from the area where his son Bertram said the exact burial location could not be located. I attempted contacting several church members, but no one has been able to provide me with any information on who currently manages accurate burial plot locations. I have been told by one member that church elders gather and walk around the site to choose plots they feel no one may be buried in when new plots are needed. I am waiting to see if additional contacts return my call before I turn over my findings to the son.

My August newspaper article will be centered around Liberty Cemetery north of Harleton, which will hopefully spur an interest in our October Texas Historic Cemetery Designation Workshop. Before the end of the year, additional articles will hopefully include Gill Community Cemetery, Algoma Cemetery, Macedonia Cemetery and either Elysian Fields or a Hallsville area cemetery.

Military Bronze Marker Found: On August 1st, Tom was contacted by the Gregg County Sheriff's Department. They found a bronze military headstone that I had documented in Friendship Cemetery in Harrison County. I contacted the property caretakers and they made arrangements to retrieve the marker and return it to the burial site. The marker had been stolen and dumped near a Gregg County scrap yard, and I was told this is a common occurrence. Scrap yards do not accept military markers for scrap money without proper documentation.

Bells Cemetery/Wayside Cemetery: Commission Member Marty Vaughan located a cemetery in Waskom known as Bells Cemetery and Wayside Cemetery. She photographed three upright markers and recorded the site's GPS coordinates. Rev. Edwin Lee has asked me about locating this cemetery over the past year or so, as it has members of his family interred there; he has an earlier recollection that there are flat markers that should be under the plant overgrowth. Weather and time permitting, he has expressed an interest in not only going out to verify the site, but to try and clean it up as well. The cemetery is located south of I-20 down Old Dumpground Road off the southern access road.

D. Education

Robert Wood reported that Sharon Dews is busy getting ready for school. With regard to our revival of the History Fair in Harrison County, we have received positive replies from all Independent School Districts (ISDs) except Karnack (on which we are still working). Individual ISDs are responsible for holding their own local History Fairs and our Commission will be in charge of the county-wide fair in which the winners of the local fairs will participate.

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

E. Historical Markers

Elks Club Marker - Gail Beil reported that on November 4th the marker for the Old Elks Club Building will be dedicated. The event will involve some form of gambling on the third floor and food and other activities on the lower floors. The District Director of the Elks has agreed to promote the event to its clubs in the State of Texas.

Birthplace of Boogie Woogie Marker - Gail also said that she will explore the possibility seeing if the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie marker dedication can be linked with the Ginnocchio. Nothing will happen on this dedication, however, until the AMTRAK construction projects at the Depot are completed and the proposed mural is erected.

Marker Workshop - The THC's Historical Marker Workshop at the Marshall Visual Arts Center on July 25th was well attended with some twenty pre-registrations and more than forty present.

F. History Museum

Jean Birmingham reported that the History Museum is still waiting on word for when Marshall's Memorial City Hall renovations may be completed allowing for the installation of the military exhibit. She noted that there continue to be notices inserted in the *Marshall News Messenger* urging folks to contribute information regarding Harrison County family members that have served in the military. Gail Beil reported on efforts to locate the Museum's Archives in the south side of the Marshall Business Center (which is located across from Memorial City Hall). This location would keep all the Museum's activities near each other, *i.e.* main exhibits and offices in the 1901 Courthouse, military exhibits in Memorial City Hall, and the archives in the Business Center. One proposal involves the idea of the Museum's Archives being responsible for the operation of the building in exchange for its assuming the cost of utilities.

G. Information Technology

Our minutes on the county website are up to date.

H. Oral History

Robert Wood reported that after last month's meeting he visited with the sons of two prominent African-American old-timers in the Harleton community. The sons will be supportive of efforts to secure oral histories, but in order for them to run interference the visits will need to be made on a Saturday when they are off work. The persons being considered for these interviews are Ed Cooper and a man called "Rondo" who works for Gateway Tire in Marshall.

Barbara Judkins reiterated her willingness to arrange for an oral history workshop. She believes that Dan Utley of the University of Texas at Austin could

be persuaded to lead the workshop but it will need to be during the summer when it would not interfere with his teaching.

I. Preservation

Robert Wood understands that Marty Vaughan has been briefed about the removal of a telecom tower and its re-erection at a different site. Marty indicated that the tower is currently on their land and will be moved elsewhere. She and Robert raised no historic sites concerns with regard to this relocation.

J. Publications

Robert Wood reported that Tom Speir wants us to continue to be on the lookout for the Old Stagecoach Trace markers that are referenced in the brochure outlining its route through the county. Currently, the marker numbers do not match up with the information in the booklet. Some are just incorrectly situated and others have disappeared. In that regard, Gail Beil noted that the markers at both ends of the road have been gone for some time.

K. Tourism

Robert Wood shared the most recent copy of the calendar that is sponsored and mailed out each month by the Marshall Regional Arts Council and is prepared by Dr. Brenda Dearman, a retired music professor from East Texas Baptist University. It was noted that the Josie Horse Ranch activities are being featured and that the Fire Ant Festival is coming up in September.

L. Goals

Our goals for next year can still focus on oral history. Perhaps we should concentrate on having the workshop that Barbara Judkins has suggested under **IV. Oral History (above)**. Robert Wood mentioned Gary L. Pinkerton, a professor from the University of Texas at Arlington, as a possible resource person. He emphasized that we should continue to share suggestions regarding goals.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

There was no report, but Gail Beil suggested that we need to nominate the Ginnochio Hotel for an award. Others thought that the Ginnochio may have gotten an award two years ago. (Our records do not indicate that the Ginnochio has

received an award from the Commission, although it may have received an award from the Historic Landmarks Preservation Board.)

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

Robert Wood reported that the Depot construction is going well. Gail Beil reported that she will ask the Marshall City Commission this evening for \$5,000 for the purchase of a new air conditioning unit for the Depot.

C. Starr Home

Barbara Judkins indicated that the Starr Home is very busy. The summer community events have gone well. In June there were 50 in attendance and in July there were 70. The Home gave out free popsicles in July. They were sponsored by Central Perks. Also that event had a couple drive in from Gladewater. The next and last event for the summer will be a week from tomorrow.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

The Hoover Watercolor Society Traveling Exhibit goes through August 26th and from the 31st continuing through October 7th is “Our Artists and Their Selfies.”

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB)

No report.

VI. Other

Ginnochio Hotel. Robert Wood introduced Alan Loudermilk, owner of the Ginnochio Hotel which adjoins the T&P Depot and has been in the process of restoration for opening as a restaurant. Alan introduced his chef, Reynaldo Jaudres.

Alan noted that the restoration of the building has taken longer than expected but that the work has been and is being done in a thorough fashion. Wherever brick met wood in the building, even if not readily visible, has been checked and whenever rotting wood was found it has been replaced. In addition,

the foundation has been steel reinforced so that the structure will not depend alone on its wooden timbers for support.

In the past a balcony was removed. It is being replaced using structural steel. In the 1890s there were no down spouts. In order to keep the original exterior appearance of the hotel, there are still no visible down spouts. Instead the drainage from the roof flows through the new balcony and ties directly into the city sewers.

Reynaldo Jaudres shared his hopes as he develops the culinary aide of the new venture. He plans to work with county farmers and cattle raisers to secure local produce and beef. The emphasis will be on fresh American cuisine. Robert Wood, now being retired and able to farm, expressed his gratitude for the planned focus on local suppliers. Gail Beil noted that her okra crop this year has been hearty and delicious. Bill Whitis welcomed Reynaldo to Marshall.

Alan reported that his emphasis as owner will be on quality food and quality service. He plans to sell Boogie Woogie themed beer. At first it will come from Dallas, but if, as he hopes, it is embraced by Marshall and the rest of the county, he will try to have it brewed locally.

The restaurant opening is planned for a date prior to Thanksgiving this year. Phase II, The Brew Pub, will open in 2018. There will be Phase III which will include opening the upper floors. The renovations are providing for handicapped access, naturally, but this work is also consciously designed to tie into the new handicapped access which AMTRAK is installing at the Depot.

Alan said that he loves the building and has appreciated the community's support. Gail Beil reiterated her hope that the Depot Museum might be able to have a fundraiser gala at the Ginnochio before its formal opening. Alan expressed his willingness to work toward that event.

Robert Wood thanked Alan and Reynaldo for sharing their plans with the Commission.

VII. Administrative

No concerns were discussed.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be September 14th 2017 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill