

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
September 14th 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, Marty Vaughan, Gail Beil, Thomas Richardson, and Barbara Judkins.

Visitors Present: none.

Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on September 14th 2017 at 1:35 p.m. in the Blake House of the Starr Family Home State Historic Site and welcomed all to the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of August 10th 2017 were approved as distributed.

III. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Bill Whitis, Tom Speir shared information regarding 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	14,535.82
Friends of the HCHC Fund	1,392.16

Tom Speir provided an update on the records of the commission which showed that through August 31st we had spent \$2,714 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 \$286.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Tom Speir has recorded Fort Crawford Spring (41HS1019) as an archeological site. October is Texas Archeology Month and there will be events at the Starr Family Home and the annual Cemetery Tour.

Starr Family Home. On October 21st there will be the 8th annual Victorian Fair at the Starr Family Home State Historic Site. Guests will enjoy nineteenth century toys and games, viewing living history demonstrations, and making their own old-time crafts. The Rusk County Dulcimers will play and talk to guests about the history of the dulcimer. The highlight of the event will be the hilariously dramatic Victorian Melodrama presented by, East Texas Baptist University Associate Professor of Theater, John Dement and his students. Popcorn will be available for throwing at the villain! Unique items will be available for purchase in the site store including a line of men's products by a local company, Beard Joy. Later in the month, on October 31st, all are invited to Trick or Treat at the house. Goodies will be given to the children only, but all guests can view the first floor of Maplecroft, play games and make a not-so-scary monster bookmark! "The Hallo-Wiener" by Dav Pilkey will be read at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

Cemetery Tour. Barbara Judkins reported that this year's tour will include three different cemeteries in the City of Marshall (last year was Wiley, Powermill and Marshall). This "city" focus is due to travel times between cemetery locations out in the county and also because of concerns to keep some cemeteries "publicity free" so as not to attract vandals. Like last year, there will be hosts located at each cemetery to highlight its attractions and history. The tour will be on the 28th of October and the schedule will be as follows: Barbara Judkins will host the Hebrew Cemetery at 11:00 a.m., Ann Brannon will host the Greenwood Cemetery at 1:00 p.m., and Gail Beil will host the McJohnsons Cemetery at 3:00 p.m. Barbara reported that in the future we will plan for tours twice a year, once in the spring and again in the fall. We will also hope to extend the tours into other parts of the

county. Barbara also volunteered to place an advertisement in the *Marshall News Messenger* and provide a brochure to give out to the folks who attend this fall.

B. Archives

Tom Speir reported a new tool: a newspaper archival kit. He encouraged someone to please come use it. Marty Vaughan volunteered to come on Wednesday, September 20th at 1:00 p.m. to help with its use.

C. Cemeteries

Cemetery Tour. The Cemetery Tour in celebration of Texas Archeology Month is included under *IV. A. Archeology (above)*.

Historic Texas Cemeteries. The Historic Texas Cemetery Designation Workshop by the THC will be held on Tuesday October 24th from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Marshall Visual Arts Center. Ann Brannon suggested that we should provide refreshments. Gail Beil will do cookies. Tom Speir and Bill Whitis will provide water. Participants are to *RSVP* to THC in Austin.

Cemetery Highway Signs. Tom announced that the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) has reported that they have ordered the following signs for county cemeteries that do not have them: two signs (green) for Pope Cemetery, one (brown) for Ewing Chapel Cemetery, two (brown) for County Line Cemetery, and one (brown) for Noonday Cemetery. (*Note: brown highway signs are for officially those designated as an Historic Texas Cemetery by THC.*)

Note also: Bill Whitis is snowed under this month with work at the Print Shop (and has a new dog!) and, therefore, was unable to prepare his monthly report for this meeting.

D. Education

History Fair. Tom Speir shared that Sharon Dews reports that the History Fair is on track. In September Harleton, Hallsville, Karnack, Waskom, Elysian Fields, and Marshall Independent School Districts (ISDs) were notified and materials distributed to the teachers. She noted that she had to correct the theme on the materials; the correct theme is “Conflict and Compromise in History.” Marty Vaughan indicated that she had checked with Waskom ISD to make sure the correct person got the information.

Junior Historians. Sharon also reported that Mary Katherine Marshall from the Texas State Historical Association is interested in having the Marshall ISD

form a chapter to participate in the Junior Historian program to help with the Museum on Main Street exhibit and the National History Day contest in addition to the annual Junior Historian History Fair. Sharon is in the process of organizing the chapter at Marshall High School.

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

E. Historical Markers

Marker Restoration. Tom Speir reminded us 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. Logan hopes to refinish three markers before Halloween, weather permitting. The commission suggested that he refurbish the ones at Trinity Episcopal Church, Powder Mill Cemetery, and Grover Cemetery.

Old Elks Lodge Marker. This marker has been received and the plans for its dedication are being worked on.

Bishop College Marker. Tom Speir noted that the Bishop College marker got approved last year but the approval lapsed because it was not paid for. Plans then were to put the marker on the back side of the old Bishop campus on US80. Tom noted that we can reapply this year and should not have trouble getting the marker approved again. It was noted that the Bishop Blue organization hopes to restore the house at 1401 Herndon, across from where Bishop faculty housing was once located, and place the records which they have gathered at that site. This house dates to 1941. Bishop Blue expects to have the restoration work completed at end of this year so that the house can then be used by resident scholars. Bishop Blue would like for the Bishop marker to be placed at the 1401 Herndon site. However, the commission feels that it should be placed in the available parking lot site on US80 near the college's former location on US80. It was agreed to give the marker's original sponsor from last year one last chance to pay for it. If he fails to come up with the money, then we will allow Bishop Blue to become the new sponsors and place the marker where they wish.

Birthplace of Boogie Woogie Marker. Tom reminded us that we have received the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie Marker. However, it may be January before the construction project at the Marshall Depot is completed. We will want input from the Ginnochio Hotel folks as well as the Depot regarding the choice of placement. The desire is to accompany the marker with a four by eight foot mural.

Thus, the final location at the Depot, how and with what the marker will be erected, and who might do the mural is still in the works.

New Marker Applications. For this year, Gail Beil is hoping to complete an application for a marker for the Old Cities Service Station building in downtown Marshall. Also, she is still interested in working on a marker application for the Black Business District and for one on architect C.G. Lancaster but these applications will not be ready for this year's submissions. Thomas Richardson handed in more documentation for the application for a marker for the Old Hallsville Bank building which with the one for Young's Mill Pond will be resubmitted this fall. Tom Speir reported that we have not received any word from Wiley College regarding what work that they may have done toward applications for markers in memory of Coach "Pop" Long and Dr. Lawrence Nixon.

F. History Museum

Annual Luncheon Lecture Series. Just prior to our meeting today, Becky Palmer delivered a flyer reporting on the History Museum's annual lecture and luncheon series. This year the luncheons will be on Thursdays (October 5th and 26th in the Marshall Visual Arts Center from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.). Food will come from Neely's Restaurant; reservations are \$15 each. Music at the luncheons will be provided by Dixieland Band, coordinated by Dr. Jerry Payne. On October 5th, this year's "Journeys: Harrison County Life Stories" will begin with Francene Neely Lewis and her presentation on the history of Neely's Restaurant and its founders: "The most important thing about Neely's is the feeling you get when you walk in, the friendly staff, and of course 'A Taste of History.'"

Endorsement of Location for the History Museum Library. Gail Beil spoke in her role as a Marshall City Commissioner. She continues to talk with Janet Cook about moving the History Museum's library to the current Marshall Economic and Development Corporation (MEDCO) building across from the Memorial City Hall. Gail indicated that her hope was that Marshall could sell the old City Laundry Building (the Marshall Visual Arts Center) which now houses local artists, their studios, and their works and the Marshall Chamber of Commerce and which provides a venue for various events. Under this plan the artists as well as the library would be relocated to the, by then former, MEDCO Building. This arrangement would make all the History Museum's venues within easy walking distance of each other: main offices and exhibits in the 1901 Courthouse, military exhibits in the renovated Memorial City Hall on the square, and the library across

the street from it. The commission endorsed the idea of having the library in this new location.

G. Information Technology

Our minutes on the county website are up to date. The font size for the reference to our minutes on the county webpage has been increased.

H. Oral History

Tom Speir reminded us that oral history equipment is available at the office for anyone desiring to make use of it.

I. Preservation

Sabine Farms. Tom Speir reported that a letter had been received by the THC from Jacqueline Johnson asking for support for Sabine Farms and that the THC had contacted him. Ms. Johnson wants copies of some of the maps of the site. Tom suggested that she contact Helen G. Murray of the Sabine Farms Educational Society, Inc. He also offered the idea that it might be good to construct a pavilion at the site which could be used for gatherings there. Such a structure could then also serve as a shelter for any original timbers that they may happen locate and which might eventually be employed in the possible restoration of one (or more) of the original buildings.

Construction Projects. Tom also reported that there has recently been a flood of requests regarding various construction projects. Several involve telecom towers: one at Jonesville, one on I-20 east of Marshall, and one on US59 south near a minor archeological site for which the THC's permission will be needed. There was also a request regarding the Fort Crawford sub-station.

Barber Designed House at 707 East Burlison Street. Tom Speir passed around the August 27th issue of the *Marshall News Messenger* featuring an article on the house at 707 East Burlison Street. Local artist, Dennis O'Bryant has lived there since 1995 but only recently has become aware of its history. Chris DiMattei, an architect from Massachusetts, contacted him and he discovered that it was designed by an important nineteenth century architect, George F. Barber, who built houses across the country. These houses were not just standard patterns. Barber would work with his clients to customize the structures for their particular use. DiMattei has researched and documented Barber's work for years and co-authored a book on his work called *Architectural Ragtime*. He has discovered over 2,000 homes designed by Barber and still standing, with 106 of them in Texas.

J. Publications

The Old Stagecoach Trace markers that are referenced in a brochure outlining its route through the county were discussed. Tom Speir reported that Smart Advertising can do new signs for us but they will not last twenty years. He will look into another source for more durable signs. All the signs need to be correctly situated as well as replaced before a new brochure can be published.

K. Tourism

Tom Speir showed the latest community 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. He has not been informed of any cemetery cleanups this fall. He noted that the calendar reports that the Texas Jewish Historical Society will meet in Marshall on October 20th.

L. Goals

Fire Inspections. Tom Speir reminded us that he plans on contacting the County Fire Marshall regarding our jointly offering free inspections this fall for old/historic homes in the county.

James Farmer Jr. Statue. Gail Beil reported on plans to raise funds for a statue of James Farmer, Jr., Marshall native and civil rights pioneer, with the idea that it be erected on the west side of the 1901 Courthouse. On September 25th at the County Commissioners Court, Gail, as chair of the Wiley College Great Debaters, will make the request for that placement. She indicated that Bill Moyers, Ben Vaught, and Hank Thomas have agreed to raise the money for a statue. Tom Speir suggested that we find out if the THC has any concerns about the possible erection of such a statue in this historic location.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

Richard Magrill suggested that we nominate the Marshall ISD for an award for its work in preserving the heritage of its previous schools. In each of the three new elementary school buildings opened this fall, it has named four hallways in memory of twelve predecessor schools. These hallways are fitted with museum quality markers picturing the buildings and summarizing the history of each school. The markers both memorialize the schools and encourage an interest in history. Tom Speir handed Richard the nomination form.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

See James Farmer, Jr. Statue under **Section IV. Goals** (*above*).

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

Robert Wood was not able to be present for this meeting. Tom Speir noted that the new Amtrak construction is on-going.

C. Starr Home

The Victorian Fair and Trick or Treat at the Starr Home in celebration of Texas Archeology Month is included under **IV. A. Archeology** (*above*). Barbara Judkins reported that the Home will dedicate its newly restored working kitchen (with wood-burning stove) on December 16th. (It is expected that the kitchen will be first used on October 22nd.) The Home also has plans to raise private gifts to enhance its work. These gifts will be handled through the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Tom Speir called attention to The Hoover Watercolor Society Traveling Exhibit, "Our Artists and Their Selfies," which continues through October 7th.

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB)

No report.

VI. Other

Jonesville General Store. On November 4th the Jonesville General Store will celebrate its 170th anniversary. There will be a bluegrass band there for the occasion. The store's annual Christmas party will be celebrated on the 2nd Saturday in December.

VII. Administrative

Incoming Mail. Tom Speir shared acknowledgments regarding receipt of our payments for memberships in various organizations and reported that we have received a brochure on preparing for floods! He also called attention to the *Medallion* article about Caddo Lake in the most recent issue of the THC magazine.

Pop-Up Display and Public Address System. The commission admired the newly purchased pop-up display. In addition to the display, Tom indicated that we now have a battery-powered public address system. Anyone can borrow either.

Texans in World War I. Tom noted that we have received an invitation from the Central Texas Historical Association to a program on “Texans in World War I.” The gathering will be at College Station.

Facebook Page. Photos for our Facebook page are still needed.

East Texas Historical Association Meeting. Gail Beil and Barbara Judkins will attend the upcoming meeting of the East Texas Historical Association in Galveston at Moody Gardens.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be October 12th 2017 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill