

# HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

February 8<sup>th</sup> 2018

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, Robert Wood, Becky Palmer, Bill T. Whitis, Jean Birmingham, Ann Brannon, and Barbara Judkins.

**Visitors Present:** John Fortune, Pat Odom, L.C. Chatham, Berenda Chatham, and Gerald Gibson.

### Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on February 8<sup>th</sup> 2018 at 1:30 p.m. in the conference room of the T&P Depot Museum and welcomed all to the meeting.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of January 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 were approved as sent out.

### III. Treasurer's Report

Bill Whitis 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	14,537.65
Friends of the HCHC Fund	3,642.51

Tom Speir provided an update on the financial records of the Commission which showed that our expenses to date show \$255 having been spent of the \$3,000 included in the county budget for the fiscal year running from October 2017 through September of 2018, leaving a balance of \$2,745.

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

##### **A. Archaeology**

*Union Missionary Baptist Church.* Tom Speir reported that Gary Endsley, Director of Collins Academy (500 E. Broadway, Jefferson, TX 75657) had sent out another newsletter on the work toward restoring Union Missionary Baptist Church.

*Archeological Sites.* Tom reported that we are still trying to track down the sites of some of the schools and springs in the County so that they can be recorded. Bill Whitis has spoken with folks who think they know where Sweet Home School was located.

*Rosenwald Schools.* Gerald Gibson is at work on the locations of the old Rosenwald Schools which served African Americans. He asked if there is a definitive list of the schools. Tom Speir responded that we are just interested in what we can track down. Gerry explained that the reason for his question was that in reviewing the sites funded in Harrison County which appear in the Fisk University list, he is hearing local references to the names of schools that Fisk does not list. He did find that the school in Karnack was renamed and such renaming may account for some of the discrepancies. Tom will send both our local working list and the Fisk list to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in Austin and ask that they make a decision regarding how they would like for us to proceed.

##### **B. Archives**

Tom Speir reported that he had not had the time since our last meeting to do any work in our archives and that help would be appreciated.

##### **C. Cemeteries**

*Greenwood Cemetery.* Bill Whitis reported that he had taken new photos at Greenwood especially where headstones had been unearthed. (These grave sites were known and recorded but the stones had been obscured by accumulations of dirt over them.) Tom Speir reported that the City of Marshall wants us to pursue

placing signs at the entrances to Greenwood which we hope can help to prevent unauthorized burials there.

***Hamm Cemetery.*** Bill is still trying to locate the Hamm Cemetery. In fact, someone called him today who thinks that he knows its location. He passed around an aerial view of a forested area and indicated where it may be located. (It is the densest part and it may be very hard to find any physical evidence there.)

***Scratch Eye Cemetery.*** Bill reported that very recently the Air Force Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp (JROTC) from the Marshall Independent School District (MISD) went out to the Scratch Eye Cemetery and did a good clean-up. They asked if there were other cemeteries in need of clean-ups and he gave them a pretty extensive list.

***Old Canaan Cemetery.*** So far work has not been successful on locating the specific site of the Old Canaan Cemetery. Tom reported that he will contact a Mr. Brewster, who lives in the area, to see if he can help with the location.

***Markers for the Graves of Confederate Soldiers.*** Ann Brannon reported that she has three more graves that have not yet been marked as the burial places of Confederate soldiers. She is securing the markers for these three. (The markers are quite large and are now being installed flat in order to convenience cemetery caretakers.)

***Spring Cemetery Tour.*** Barbara Judkins reported on work on the Spring Cemetery Tour. She shared a brief report on the African American Saint Mary's Cemetery and has secured information on an interesting person who is buried there from one of his relatives. She is prepared to do a talk at the cemetery as a part of the tour. She noted that the Ewing Chapel Cemetery Committee is willing to provide docents at that site for the tour. We will still need someone to make the presentation for Cave Springs Cemetery. She suggested the date of April the 21<sup>st</sup> which was agreed to by those present.

#### **D. Education**

***History Fair.*** The Commission expressed its appreciation to all who worked toward and participated in the History Fair this year, especially Sharon Dewes! Apparently, the Hallsville ISD was unable to participate due to communication issues, although they received the same notices as all the others. (Karnack and Elysian Fields ISDs also *did not* participate; Harleton, Waskom, and Marshall ISDs *did* participate.) Several of our winning participants are moving forward to the regional competition (going to the regional event is the

responsibility of the winning participants). Tom was pleased to report that this year he got copies for our files of the reports which the participants prepared for their exhibits. Sharon Dewes provided the following report:

**HARRISON COUNTY HISTORY FAIR 2018**  
**Report by Sharon Dewes**

The 2018 Harrison County History Fair was held at the new Marshall Junior High School on January 27<sup>th</sup>. The facilities were beyond adequate and the MISD staff were very helpful and supportive. A special thanks goes out to Shirley Fletcher and Kevin Guerrero for their help in making the day a success.

The three participating districts evaluated the level of completion of all projects before the county-wide competition so there were fewer projects to judge, guaranteeing all projects were of the highest quality. Thanks also goes to Jeff Welch of Harleton ISD and Rhonda Sepulvado of Waskom ISD for bringing their students to participate for the first time. Marshall ISD had four teachers to submit projects: Austin Whitehead, Tiffany Wilson, Emily Dickinson, and Travis Carter. We hope to have participation from Karnack, Elysian Fields, and Hallsville ISDs next year as we continue to make progress in publicizing the event and get more districts involved.

We also want to acknowledge Mary Katherine Marshall of the Texas State Historical Association/NHD and Craig Nakashian of Texas A&M University at Texarkana for supporting the fair. Craig drove down from Texarkana to attend the fair and spent the majority of the day talking to student participants and parents about ways to improve projects and how to make them competitive at the regional level.

We also want to thank the Marshall Army ROTC students for providing support and helping as assistant judges.

Thanks to Bill Whitis, Ann Brannon, Celeste Crotwell, and Tom Speir, the judging went very smoothly.

Each student was presented with a certificate of participation and first and second place winners received a medallion and a ribbon.

The Air Force JROTC students will be given a certificate of participation in order that they will have documentation of their hours of community service.

## **WINNERS**

### **Group Exhibits**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Place**

Daniella Contreras, McKenzie Epps and Carol Ann Williams  
*For their Project on Walter E. Riptoe*

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place**

Emily Hill, Emily Blalock, Brianna Lovera and Regan Greer  
*For their Project on Caddo Lake Water War*

### **Individual Exhibits**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Place**

Skylar Smith  
*For her Project on the Missouri Compromise*

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place**

Elijah Harris  
*For his Project on the Powder Mill Cemetery*

### **Group Documentary**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Place**

Jasmine Vargas and Susana Argote  
*For their Project on the Paramount Theater*

### **Individual Documentary**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Place**

Levi Ford  
*For his Project on Jefferson, Texas in the Civil War*

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place**

Amber Davis  
*For her Project on Billy the Kid*

***By the numbers:*** 16 projects were judged with 30 students participating over all; there were 3 documentaries, 0 performances, and 13 traditional exhibits; 5 MISD students served in a support role; and 7 projects are eligible to advance to the NHD Regional

Competition to be hosted by Texas A&M University at Texarkana on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017.

### **E. Historical Markers**

Tom Speir reported that on the subject of historical markers we have a lot of news. THC has officially approved the marker for Young's Mill Pond (near Hallsville) and for the First State Bank of Hallsville (the check paying for the marker for the bank has already been sent in). Tom acknowledged L.C. and Berenda Chatham who were present to represent the interests of the Bishop College marker which has been officially approved. The next step is to negotiate the wording of the text. The marker application for architect C.G. Lancaster was not approved. (The narrative was of insufficient length; Gail Beil will prepare a more robust report and resubmit the application.) The text for the marker for the Booker T. Washington School in Elysian Fields has been sent out for review. The text for the historic Texas cemetery marker for Temple Emmanu-El Cemetery has been approved and sent to the foundry. The Marshall Hebrew Cemetery has sent notices to adjoining property owners regarding their application to be designated a historic Texas cemetery. Gary Pinkerton and Tom have identified where Trammel's Trace crosses I-20 but the Texas Department of Transportation says that a marker cannot be placed over an interstate highway due to safety concerns. On the other hand, Tom and Gary have identified a spot on FM2625 near TX43 where you can see the actual ruts of the trace while standing at the possible site for a marker. Rose Mary Magrill reported that the Ewing Chapel Cemetery will hold the dedication for its marker on April 7<sup>th</sup> and that all members of the Commission will be receiving invitations to the event.

### **F. History Museum**

***"Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America."*** Becky Palmer solicited volunteers to serve as docents for "Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America" exhibit that will run from March 23<sup>rd</sup> thru April 30<sup>th</sup>. This exhibit is a joint project of the History Museum and the Texas State Historical Association in connection with the "Smithsonian Museum on Main Street."

***Genealogy Workshop.*** Becky also shared information on the Museum's "Digging into Your Roots II" workshop on genealogy which will be held in cooperation with the Marshall Public Library on February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>. The cost is \$90 and includes supplies and take-home materials, lunch each day, and

free entry to the museum exhibits. This is the second year for this workshop to be offered. Last year's was very well received. There is interest in starting up a local group involved in genealogical research. Becky noted that they will have Diane Giannini to lecture on DNA and its uses in genealogical research.

***Military Museum at Memorial City Hall.*** Jean Birmingham and Becky updated the Commission on the Military Museum to be a part of the completed renovation of Marshall's Memorial City Hall. Once again, the projected opening is scheduled for this fall. The exhibits are ready and the Museum is just waiting to move them into place. Jean passed out cards giving the website address where hometown heroes can be added to the database

[www.hometownheroes.harrisoncountymuseum.org](http://www.hometownheroes.harrisoncountymuseum.org)

where you can enter the data concerning family members and their military service and upload photographs. (The Museum maintains the site.)

***Three-Year Exhibit with Rotating Community Components.*** Janet Cook is busy working on a three-year schedule of exhibits with rotating components every six months. The exhibit will be centered generally on each of the areas represented by the various ISDs in the county. The first will be the Waskom/Jonesville area and Janet is busy collecting pictures.

***2018 Military-Themed Calendar.*** Becky noted that the Museum had published a calendar for 2018 that features some of the military related items that are included in the Museum's collection. She promised to bring copies for the members of the Commission to next month's meeting.

***Permanent Home for the Museum's Collection.*** Becky noted that there is a lot going on with the Museum this year. It has received a \$100,000 grant as seed money for a permanent home for its library component and work is beginning on the possibilities. Tom Speir expressed a concern held by many on the Commission that the Museum secure a facility that will not leave the collection at the mercy of an outside entity. Ann Brannon emphasized that at some point there will be a meeting that involves the public.

## **G. Information Technology**

Our minutes continue to be posted on the county website and are currently up to date. Bill Whitis has begun pre-programming our Facebook page so that it will automatically post future notices. He hopes to do a schedule for the remainder of the year. The scheduled photos and notices will post on specific days and keep

the page constantly refreshed with new items. It was noted that old pictures of *places* tend to go off the charts, but that photos of *people* are not so popular.

## **H. Oral History**

**“Soundbites.”** Tom Speir passed around the latest newsletter, “Soundbites,” from the Texas Oral History Association.

***Oral History Workshop.*** Barbara Judkins reminded us that there will be a workshop on oral history on Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The workshop will be led by Dr. Dan Utley a professor at the University of Texas at San Marcos. Meetings will be held at the Marshall Visual Arts Center and participants will migrate to Central Perks for lunch. Dr Utley wants to limit the enrollment to 24-25 people so that he will be able to offer one-on-one instruction with each participant.

## **I. Preservation**

***Possible Demolition.*** Tom Speir has received a copy of a THC letter regarding the possible demolition of the house near Wiley College at 1003 James Farmer Road. Gail Beil supports the demolition. Tony Crosby has done an evaluation as to whether there is any portion which should be preserved. The City of Marshall wants to demolish the house, and Wiley College would like to use the five lots to construct new housing for students.

***New Power Line.*** In a followup to a previous report on a proposed highline from the Fort Crawford area sub-station to a new sub-station to be build towards the southwest, Tom has asked the power company to provide a map with three or four options. We will then evaluate the proposed routes to see which is least likely to impact any historic sites, including cemeteries.

***Preservation Texas Meeting in August.*** The Preservation Texas regional meeting will be held in Nacogdoches in August and its emphasis will be on African American history and related architecture.

## **J. Publications**

Tom Speir passed around an insert from the *Marshall News Messenger* entitled, “The Good Life,” which was published earlier this month. This insert had a large article on downtown Marshall, and the classic car shows held there.



## **K. Tourism**

**Monthly Community Calendar.** Tom Speir shared the latest community calendar of area events and noted that the Marshall Regional Arts Council will hold a dance on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The calendar is sponsored and mailed out by the Marshall Regional Arts Council and is prepared by Dr. Brenda Dearman, a retired music professor from East Texas Baptist University.

## **L. Goals**

**Three Dimensional Map of Caddo Lake.** Tom Speir reported that there is a company that creates and sells three dimensional maps of lakes and that they have one of Caddo Lake. He wondered if the Commission should purchase one? By consent, the possibility of this purchase was referred to the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Barbara Judkins will share the information with them.

## **M. Annual Preservation Awards**

Tom Speir reminded everyone to be thinking about nominations for this year's annual preservation awards.

## **V. Special Reports**

### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

Becky Palmer reported on the progress on resealing the windows, repainting them, and repairing and repainting the door facings at the 1901 Courthouse.

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

**Historical Markers.** Robert Wood reported that the depot construction projects continue to progress and that there is renewed interest at the Depot Museum concerning the marker for Marshall as the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie. In planning for its placement, Tom Speir advised that the possibility for additional markers should be taken into account. He reported that he has been asked over the last few years about the possibility of getting historical markers for the Depot area for two more subjects: one would note the Barrymore incident and the other would focus on the T&P shops. The Barrymore incident was the shooting of the patriarch of the Barrymore family of actors (ancestor of our contemporary, Drew Barrymore) at the Ginnochio Hotel following a performance in Marshall. He

survived and the shooter, the brother of the Mayor of Shreveport, was acquitted the following year. The extensive T&P shops were destroyed by a fire in 1971 (it consumed all the plant east of the Bolivar Street overpass).

**Information about T&P Bells.** Richard Magrill inquired if the Depot Museum had any records that might indicate the work that the foundry did while it was in existence. He noted that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Marshall was making plans for the erection of a new bell tower to hold an old T&P bell which had been used by the former Fairview Cumberland Presbyterian Church. He indicated that Al Key, who had been a member of the former First Presbyterian Church and whose father worked in the T&P foundry, had reported that the bell in the Presbyterian tower was from the T&P shops. Robert Wood indicated that there was paperwork which documented that the bell in the 1901 Courthouse had come from the T&P foundry. It was suggested that the Union Pacific Railroad website might be an initial source for research into the meaning of the short alpha-numeric label cast into the interior of the bell at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

### **C. Starr Family Home State Historic Site**

**Upcoming Programs.** Barbara Judkins reported that for spring break the Starr Family Home staff are working with six difference entities to do presentations: the local Beekeepers Association, the Harrison County Master Gardeners, Caddo Mounds State Historic Site (a presentation about edible plants and plants whose consumption should be avoided), Caddo Lake State Historic Site, and the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The latter will be there on Friday along with the Marshall Public Library which will be present to read to the children. There will be a fairy garden workshop in April.

**Restoration Work.** Restoration work on the service wing continues to go very slowly due to the fact that the new person hired to manage the project has run into personal family problems that have delayed his start.

**Damaging of Trees.** Of particular distress is the manner in which SWEPCO has recently butchered trees at the site (especially maples, after which the home, Maplecroft, was named). The trimming has been so severe that survival of the trees is in question. The Starr Home would have hired an arborist to do the trimming properly if it had been consulted but now the damage is already done.

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

***Billy Hassell Exhibit.*** The Billy Hassell Exhibit at the Michelson opens today with a reception. The artist favors wildlife scenes painted in bright colors that will brighten the dreary days of winter. He features birds, plants, and beautiful landscapes, many from projects of Texas Parks and Wildlife. The exhibit will run until April 14<sup>th</sup>.

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

No report.

#### **VI. Other**

***Karnack/Morton Thiokol/Longhorn Army Ammunitions Plant.*** John Fortune and Pat Odom were present. They are engaged on a project to collect information on Karnack and on the Longhorn location (now the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge) and the Thiokol Chemical Corporation work. John reported that he had been finding newspapers.com to be a particularly helpful research tool. John and Pat are specifically looking for information on the companies that operated out of the Longhorn site during the World War II era prior to Thiokol's arrival.

#### **VII. Administrative**

***Incoming Mail.*** There will be a Preservation Texas summit in Brownsville on February 28<sup>th</sup>. The current newsletter from the Harrison County History Museum has been received as well as the latest edition of the South West Texas Historical Quarterly. Publications have come in from the Texas Archeological Society, Texas Preservation, and Texas Society for State and Local History.

***John Heisman.*** Tom got an email from a Jeremy Henderson who is a writer doing research on John Heisman (after whom the Heisman Football Trophy is named). He was in Marshall during the first half of 1895. There was a tomato farming "gold rush" about then. Heisman's tomato growing efforts were quickly traded for football. Marshall Canning Company would provide farmers bedding plants for free if they promised to sell their crop to the cannery. Gerald Gibson said that he had researched the subject and could never prove that Heisman was here.

***Sabine Farms.*** It was pointed out that peaches were also a very popular crop around then, that there was a pickle factory south of Marshall, and a canning building that was a part of Sabine Farms. (Sabine Farms was an agricultural effort

set up to benefit African Americans during the New Deal and originally located on US59 south but now on FM1186 in the area of the Gill Community.) Founded in the 1930s, Sabine Farms has no connection with the tomato boom in the 1890s.

***Community Calendar.*** Tom Speir encouraged all county organizations to use the community calendar to prevent duplication of dates for various events. It was, however, pointed out that there are only so many Saturdays in a month and that some duplications are unavoidable.

***Annual Report.*** Tom has finished our annual report to THC and it is with the County Judge for his review.

***Texas Archeological Society.*** Tom reported that we had received a renewal letter from Texas Archeological Society. On motion, the chair is authorized to renew our membership every year until such time as the authorization is revoked.

***Facebook Page.*** As always, we need photos for our Facebook page.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be March 8<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

**Submitted by Richard Magrill**