

# HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

March 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, Bill T. Whitis, Ann Brannon, Thomas Richardson, and Barbara Judkins.

**Visitors Present:** David Payne and Gerald Gibson.

### Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on March 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 February 8<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	14,537.98
Friends of the HCHC Fund	1,842.56

Tom Speir provided an update on the financial records of the Commission; our expenses to date show \$556 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 \$2,444.

***Tax exempt status for Friends.*** Tom also reported that he has an email that the Internal Revenue Service has approved the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission for tax exempt status (an official determination letter is on the way).

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

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

***Archeological Sites.*** Tom Speir reported that Bob Vernon in Cass County is looking for a Caddo Indian burial place which may or may not be associated with an old village site off US59 near Pope City. We have gotten access to a document: *Before the Line*, Volume 3, "Caddo Indians: The Final Year" by Jim Tiller.

***Archeological Sites.*** Gerald Gibson has been doing a lot of research on the Rosenwald Schools but we will still have to go to the locations and see if there are any remains. Also, we are still dealing with the problem of having two different lists so the actual number of sites is still in limbo. Gerald has made contact with someone in Shreveport whose grandfather, reportedly, built all the Rosenwald Schools in Harrison County. (Out of the blue she called and shared her interest in the schools.) Tom passed around a map with possible locations for the schools marked on it.

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

Tom Speir reported that he has done a little work on filing our archives but there is still a pile of materials in a corner to be gone through.

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

***Bahá'í Cemetery.*** Bill Whitis reported that he had received an inquiry about a Bahá'í Cemetery on FM31 about a quarter mile from the Antioch Cemetery. He has visited it. It is located in the front yard of a homeowner who knows nothing about it except that people come a couple of times a year to clean and care for it. Its entrance is marked with stained glass in a metal archway. There are six graves;

four are marked and two are not. *Note:* The Bahá'í Faith is a religion teaching the essential worth of all religions, and the unity and equality of all people. Established by Bahá'u'lláh in 1863, it initially grew in Iran (Persia) and other parts of the Middle East region, where it has faced ongoing persecution since its inception. Currently it has between 5 and 7 million adherents, known as Bahá'ís, spread out into most of the world's countries and territories.

***Old New Zion Cemetery.*** Bill has also looked in on Old New Zion Cemetery in the Nesbitt community. It precedes, as its name indicates, the current New Zion Cemetery.

***Hamm Cemetery.*** Bill is waiting for Hamm Cemetery to dry out. It is on a public road: Summer Road off of Kings Road.

***Old Canaan Cemetery.*** Tom Speir mentioned efforts to investigate the location of the Old Canaan Cemetery. The property owner is willing to lead someone down in the woods where it is located but his dog got sick and caused the latest attempt to be postponed. (There is a Rosenwald School site nearby.)

***Greenwood Cemetery.*** Signs at the Greenwood Cemetery alerting people to the proper persons to contact regarding burials (including those of cremains) was discussed. Ann Brannon said that she had talked to Bill Sullivan and he said the area funeral homes always made the proper contacts before any burials took place under their auspices. Tom Speir indicated that he still thinks we need to add some signs giving the relevant information. It was pointed out that persons wishing to dispose of the cremains of a relative by burying them at the site of the existing grave of another relative will not necessarily make the proper contact even with signs posted at the entrances. Ann Brannon will bring a proposal for the signs, including costs, to our next meeting.

***McPhail Cemetery.*** Robert Wood asked if the McPhail Cemetery has been recorded as an archeological site.

***Spring Cemetery Tour.*** Barbara Judkins passed out copies of the flyer for the Spring Cemetery Tour. She will supply flyers (including 11" x 17" poster size copies to any who want them; one of the poster size ones will be going up at the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Bill Whitis agreed to be the docent at the Cave Springs Cemetery. Barbara will serve as docent for the Saint Mary's African American Cemetery, and the Ewing Chapel Cemetery Committee will provide docents at that site for the tour. The tour date will be Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. The schedule will be as follows: Cave Springs Cemetery 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., 9814 South Highway 431; Saint Mary's Baptist Church Cemetery 11:15 a.m. to

12:15 p.m., 1512 Peach Orchard Road; and Ewing Chapel Cemetery 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.. CR 3017 (Rosborough Springs Road). Participants are encouraged to bring their own picnics for this final spot. A restroom will be provided there. Also, free water, lemonade, and cookies!

#### **D. Education**

***History Fair.*** Tom Speir showed a photo from the *Marshall News Messenger* of winners in the Harrison County History Fair who also won at the regional event and are going on to compete at the state level.

***Hallsville Schools.*** Thomas Richardson asked about the history of the schools in Hallsville. There is an anniversary coming up and he would appreciate a good date. He has always said the schools in Hallsville began in 1870 but it might have been 1869 which was the beginning of the town. He figures that students must have attended school that year somewhere, perhaps in the Masonic Lodge.

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

***T&P Conductor Fred Earl Ricks Home.*** Tom Speir reported that Bill Whitis has an employee who may want a marker for his home which was erected in 1900 by T&P conductor Fred Earl Ricks. It is the first home built on Lower Port Caddo Road.

***Marshall Birthplace of Boogie Woogie Marker.*** Tom Speir reminded the Commission that the City of Marshall has already signed the approval form, and is not very concerned about where the marker is to be installed. Nevertheless, we are wanting a consensus from our Commission, the financial sponsors (Jack Canson, *etc.*), the City and the Depot as to where the marker finally ends up. No decision will be made on its location until after AMTRAK finishes its construction projects.

***Ewing Chapel Cemetery Marker Dedication.*** Rose Mary Magrill passed out invitations to the Historic Texas Cemetery marker dedication to be held at the Ewing Chapel Cemetery on Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup> 2018. The dedication will begin at 10:00 a.m. Following the ceremony, lunch will be served at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church for all those who have indicated that they will attend the meal.

***Temple Emanu-El Cemetery Marker.*** Tom Speir reported that he has met with Howard “Rusty” Millstein to discuss the location of the Temple Emanu-El Cemetery Marker. The ceremony to dedicate this marker should soon be

announced. It was noted the proposed location for the marker will place it under trees where it will be in constant shade (and in danger of bird droppings).

***James Farmer, Jr. Statue.*** Tom reported that he ran into Gail Beil recently and that she indicated that the group working on the project to erect a statue of James Farmer Jr., noted Civil Rights activist and Marshall native, is meeting and making progress. She has a packet of information to share with folks who are interested but Tom has not yet received it. Before any new statues or markers are erected on Harrison County property, the County Commission wants to develop and have in place a policy which would offer consistent guidance. Tom is running the project regarding such a policy. He has met with Commissioner Jay Ebard and County Judge Hugh Taylor. Work is ongoing. He indicated that he hopes that the policy can be “painted with a very broad brush.”

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

***2018 Military-Themed Calendars.*** Tom Speir reported that Becky Palmer was not able to be present today. She did, however, send the promised copies of the Museum’s “Service and Sacrifice: Harrison County at War 2018 Calendar,” for all who would like some. (The calendars are in Tom’s car and can be picked up after the meeting.) It was noted that Veterans have been very appreciative of the calendar.

***“Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America.”*** Docents are still needed for the “Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America” exhibit that will run from March 23<sup>rd</sup> thru April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Marshall Public Library. 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.” Also help is needed in unpacking the crates and setting up the exhibit.

#### **G. Information Technology**

Our minutes continue to be posted on the county website and are currently up to date. Bill Whitis has pre-programmed our Facebook page and notices are already being automatically posted.

#### **H. Oral History**

***Oral History Workshop.*** Tom 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. Barbara Judkins has created a flyer for the workshop. She indicated that 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, and for that reason, he suggested that we ask participants to pre-register.

### **I. Preservation**

***Maintenance Needed.*** Tom Speir reported that Audrey Kariel has sent out word concerning Lady Bird Johnson's Birthplace Home and others that are deteriorating and need refurbishing. Carter plantation/Dogan Home in the Wiley College area is the most in need of work, but there are also several other historic homes that need looking after.

***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**

***Brochures.*** When coming back from Shreveport recently, Tom Speir picked up the information brochures about Harrison County that are available at the Texas Travel Center on I-20. He passed them around for comments. Bill Whitis noted that there was no copy of the Buard History Trail brochure. Tom will try to get some to Marty Vaughan and ask that she deliver them to the Center.

***Flight to Sabine.*** Tom Speir shared a communication from Carroll J. Scogin-Brincefield who is requesting any family stories that have been passed down regarding involvement in the "Flight to Sabine (Runaway Scrape)." Carroll is composing the story of the flight using personal family stories and numerous diaries and stories from different regions of the state about the mass evacuations of towns, farms and home sites. Contact information: P.O. Box 45, Hallettsville, Texas 77964, [brincefieldc@gmail.com](mailto:brincefieldc@gmail.com).

***Inez Hughes Transcript.*** Gerald Gibson has located a transcript of an interview with Inez Hughes which contains interesting information not generally known.

***Stagecoach Trace Brochure.*** Gerald also raised the question of resolving the discrepancies between the numbers on the Stagecoach Trace Markers and the numbering in the brochure that is to guide people around the county. Tom Speir

indicated that we need to rewrite the brochure to correspond with the marker numbers.

### **K. Tourism**

***County Promotion at Texas Travel Center.*** Barbara Judkins reported that the Texas Travel Center is planning a promotion of Harrison County attractions for Friday May 11<sup>th</sup> and that she will be happy to take any materials for inclusion. It was suggested that Marty Vaughan might be willing to go and set up a table with the Commission's banner. (Barbara will be there representing the Starr Family Home State Historic Site.)

***Tourism Promotion.*** Tom reported he had received a letter from Collins Academy in Jefferson regarding an "Art on the River" event to be held on March 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. He noted that Collins Academy is doing a great job of promoting and sponsoring events in Marion County and asked for help in developing ideas about how we can promote historic tourism across Harrison County. "People are heading to Jefferson all the time," he said, and "we would like for them to at least pause in Harrison County."

***Monthly Community Calendar.*** Tom Speir shared the latest community calendar of area events. 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**

Tom Speir reported that he had found an old list of goals for the Commission which called for training and for reminding members that they should complete the on-line training sessions on open meetings and public information.

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

Tom Speir reminded everyone to be thinking about nominations for this year's annual preservation awards. Robert Wood plans to nominate Alan Loudermilk and the restoration team for their work in restoring the Ginnochio Hotel Building. (It has been reopened as a restaurant.) Next month we will have to vote on the awards and we should get nominations to Ann Brannon or Barbara Judkins by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

It was urged that nominees be local people from outside the membership of the Commission and that if there are commission members we feel are deserving

of an award that we nominate them for other regional or state honors such as the Lucille Terry Preservation Award.

## **V. Special Reports**

### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

No report.

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

**Renovations.** Robert Wood indicated that the renovations are within two months of completion. The work is going well and all plans are coming together, but their accomplishment has tried the patience of many. Several members commented favorably on the newly installed brass railings on the entrance stairs leading down to the passenger tunnel. Robert asked if anyone knows of someone interested in a handicapped elevator. Anyone so inclined should make an offer for the one that is being removed. The Depot Museum will have a fund raiser on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Signage.** Robert asked if the Commission would be interested in helping with signage that will point passengers and Depot visitors in the direction of the museum. Tom Speir suggested that we wait until the construction work is finished in order to have a better idea of what is needed. Robert indicated that amount will probably be three or four hundred dollars. It was noted that we will need adequate documentation and specifications. These will be supplied to us at our next meeting for further consideration and a vote.

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

**Upcoming Programs.** Barbara Judkins reported a Peacemakers Quilt Exhibition is coming to the Starr Home. The Peacemakers are an organization of Saint Joseph Catholic Church and the showing will be a joint venture of the church and the home.

**Restoration Work.** It is hoped that renewed work on the restoration of the service wing will begin soon.

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

**Billy Hassell Exhibit.** The Billy Hassell Exhibit at the Michelson continues until April 14<sup>th</sup>. 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.

***Kentucky Derby Party.*** The Michelson will have its annual Kentucky Derby Party on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> beginning at 4:30 p.m. This event is one of the means of raising funds for the support of its programs.

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

No report. However, it was noted that the work on the Allen house on South Washington is coming along well.

#### **VI. Other**

No report.

#### **VII. Administrative**

***Incoming Mail.*** We have received a new issue of the THC's *Medallion*.

***Annual Report to THC.*** The annual report was reviewed by the County Commission and amended to show that the Stagecoach Road Historical Marker had been remounted on a substantial base which we hope will offer more protection from theft.

***Texas Archeological Society.*** We have renewed our membership in the Texas Archeological Society.

***Military Appreciation Night at Maverick Field.*** Each year the Marshall Maverick Baseball Team recognizes those who serve, or have served, in the military at one of its home games. This year that night is March 16<sup>th</sup>. Anyone wishing to be a part of this recognition should be at the baseball field at 6:15 p.m.

***GPS Locator.*** Tom Speir led a discussion regarding a GPS locator. He is loaning his personal instrument to Richard Magrill for work in adding the GPS coordinates to the book giving the texts and locations for all the historical markers in the county. On motion, the Commission will buy its own GPS locator at a cost of \$150.

***Facebook Page.*** As always, we need photos for our Facebook page. Attractive photos featuring spring blossoms would be especially nice for this time of year.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be April 12<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

**Submitted by Richard Magrill**