

**HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 10<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, Bill T. Whitis, Barbara Judkins, Jean Birmingham, Robert Wood, Marty Vaughan, Thomas Richardson, and Gail Beil.

**Visitors Present:** Mike Shaw and Gerald Gibson.

**Call to Order**

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on May 10<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 April 12<sup>th</sup> 2018 were approved as distributed.

**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	14,538.71
Friends of the HCHC Fund	2,192.66

Tom Speir provided an update on the financial records of the Commission; our expenses show \$1,177 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 \$1,823.

Tom announced he is having to find another house in which to live (his landlord wants to move his daughter into the property which Tom has been renting). Also, Tom's wife may take a teaching position outside of Harrison County. Thus, he may be resigning in the next 60 days. (He also is scheduled for his second cataract surgery on Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup> and we hope there will be no complications from the anesthesia.)

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

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

*Recording Archeological Sites.* With regard to his possible departure from our midst, Tom Speir reported that Gary Ensley at the Collins Academy in Jefferson has been appointed a steward for the office of the Texas State Archeologist. He has agreed to serve our commission at no charge whenever we have sites that need to be recorded.

*Canaan Cemetery.* Since our last meeting, Tom investigated a site that turned out to be of no archeological interest. However, the Canaan Cemetery has been recorded as site 41HS1020.

*Rosenwald Schools.* Gerald Gibson has been working hard on locating the sites of the Rosenwald Schools. Bottom line: we are still working on the survey of those sites and Gerry is taking the lead. Southern Methodist University did a survey of these sites around 1968 for the Army Corps of Engineers. Tom has secured a copy for the office.

*Springs.* We are still working on recording the springs in the county, but that is not going very fast.

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

Tom Speir reported that the condition of our office archives has much improved since he first took office. He has recently donated a bookcase and it is currently filled with archeological research materials.

### **C. Cemeteries**

**Old Carter Cemetery.** Bill Whitis reported that a cemetery containing the graves of Rebecca Buard's maternal grandparents has been located and visited. Old Carter Cemetery, as it is known, is off Marshall-Leigh Road (roughly two miles off). During the visit there were lots of cow patties encountered but no snakes!

**Cave Springs Cemetery.** The Cave Springs Cemetery Association is working on their Texas Historic Cemetery application.

**Powder Mill Cemetery.** The Powder Mill Cemetery is actually larger than the currently fenced area. It is possibly that the area outside the current fence is where white people were buried and that Z.T. Craver fenced the cemetery in a way that excluded that area.

**Greenwood Cemetery Repair Work.** Bill noted that Ann Brannon had reported that the repair work by Texas Cemetery Restoration is going fairly quickly. Sixty percent has been finished.

**Hebrew Cemetery and Marshall Cemetery Repair.** Bill also noted that Rusty Brenner and his crew will be doing work at the Hebrew Cemetery and a couple of things at the Marshall Cemetery.

**Woodlawn Cemetery.** Mike Shaw was present representing the Woodlawn Cemetery Association. He now has the folder of information on the cemetery and plans to complete the application for Woodlawn for a Texas Historic Cemetery designation and a marker.

**Spring Cemetery Tour Canceled.** Barbara Judkins reported that the planned and scheduled spring tour was canceled due to rain. During discussion with Bill Whitis and Rose Mary Magrill, it was decided that the tour which is to include Cave Springs Cemetery, Saint Mary's Baptist Church Cemetery, and Ewing Chapel Cemetery will be moved to a date to be determined in October and that the tour of the cemeteries in the Caddo National Wildlife Refuge will be pushed into next spring's slot.

**Unauthorized Burials.** The need for signs at the various cemeteries warning people against making unauthorized burials (especially of, but not limited to, cremains) was discussed again. Mike Shaw indicated that this problem has also been a topic of discussion at the Woodlawn Cemetery Association. Tom Speir emphasized that we needed help on the best wording that can be used for signs at each location.

## **D. Education**

Robert Wood reported that he had run into Sharon Dews, and that she was pleased to report that Levi Ford was a winner in the statewide History Fair held in Austin. His project was on “Jefferson, Texas in the Civil War.” Next stop for Levi is the national competition which will be held in Maryland.

## **E. Historical Markers**

**Webinars.** Tom Speir shared the Texas Historical Commission (THC) announcement that there are free webinars being provided in June, July, and August for all those working on applications for the markers that can be secured through THC. The information was passed on to Mike Shaw.

**Marker Restoration and Repair.** Tom reported that the commission’s kit for marker repair is in the possession of Juli Jamison and she will be taking out some Boy Scouts for marker work in order to pass on the restoration skills developed in the recent Eagle Scout projects.

**Young’s Mill Pond.** The Young’s Mill Pond marker is at the stage of having its text approved.

**Booker T. Washington School at Elysian Fields.** The Booker T. Washington School marker’s text has been approved.

**Others.** In other marker news, the narrative for the marker which would commemorate the Barrymore shooting at the Depot is being written. Since Waskom, the only municipality in the county without a marker, is probably never going to step up and apply, Tom proposed we do an undertold story application for Waskom as the “Gateway to Texas.” We could also apply for an undertold story marker for the T&P Railroad Shops (which burned down in the 1970s). Regarding the possible application for a marker by the First Presbyterian Church in Waskom, Marty Vaughan reported that it has changed its name and she doesn’t know if it’s still presbyterian. With regard to the Hallsville Bank marker, we don’t know if the text has been approved (the marker will be attached to the building itself in Hallsville). The Temple Emmanu-El Cemetery marker has not been physically received from the foundry. Tom has spoken to the city commissioner for Longview Heights where the marker will be erected and he is excited about it and wants to be present for the dedication. Tom noted that we want to get the Stagecoach Trace markers updated and corrected within the next year. He showed the design of the marker. There was inquiry about the cost of historical markers. It was noted that there are various sizes and that the largest costs \$1800.

***Marshall as the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie.*** Robert Wood noted that the board of the Depot had a meeting this morning but did not decide on an exact location for this marker. Tom Speir emphasized that there was a need to consult various interested parties including the City of Marshall which owns the parking lot where its erection is proposed. Gail Beil reported that she was at the Depot meeting this morning. She also reported that as a part of Marshall's Labor Day weekend festivities the dedication for the Boogie Woogie marker is planned for Sunday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. She described the location of various markers — the current Depot marker, the broken but restored Depot marker (that will be mounted on a plinth and placed where the current marker is with the current pole marker being relocated), and the Boogie Woogie marker itself. She indicated that all the relevant parties had given their approval. The celebration of Marshall as the "Birthplace of Boogie Woogie" will, she believes, be the beginning of a whole lot of new developments in Marshall.

***James Farmer, Jr. Statue.*** Tom Speir noted the tabling of the proposal considered at the last meeting regarding the development of recommendations for the County Commissioners Court for a policy regarding the erection of statues on county property. This subject needs more work and maybe a special meeting of our commission. Tom hopes to see the county judge next week. The development of a county policy will be a delaying factor in the process of erecting a statue of James Farmer, Jr. (noted Civil Rights activist and Marshall native.)

## **F. History Museum**

***Thanks.*** Jean Birmingham offered the Museum's thanks to all who attended the Smithsonian Museum Exhibit on "Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America." It was well attended. Jean urged folks to come to the Museum!

***"History Rocks."*** The Museum's next project is the summer day camp for kids. Handouts for this event were passed out. It is called "History Rocks" and will be held June 25<sup>th</sup> to June 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. till 12 noon. Participants will visit the T&P Depot Museum on Monday, the Michelson Museum of Art on Tuesday, the Starr Family Home State Historic Site on Thursday, and the Harrison County Historical Museum on Friday.

***Reception.*** All are invited to a reception honoring former Harrison County Historical Museum President Dr. Gwin Morris and Brenda Morris on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2:00 p.m. in the 1901 Courthouse.

## **G. Information Technology**

Tom Speir called attention to the great job that Bill Whitis is doing maintaining our Facebook page. He indicated that our minutes on the county's website need to be brought up to date. (Richard Magrill will supply the minutes and Bill will see to the update).

## **H. Oral History**

**Oral History Workshop.** Tom Speir passed out a flyer for the "Oral History Workshop for Beginners" which our commission is offering on June 9<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It will be held at the Marshall Visual Arts Center and will introduce participants to oral history planning, interviewing techniques, equipment choices, ethical and legal considerations, and tips for preserving and sharing interviews. It is free and open to the public. The workshop will be led by Dr. Dan Utley, a professor at the Texas State University at San Marcos.

## **I. Preservation**

**Blocker-Ware Plantation House.** Tom Speir reported that the Blocker-Ware plantation house is being sold. Recently, there was an open house to show the home to prospective buyers. It is a public sale.

**Power Lines/Towers.** Tom noted that, from time to time, we receive requests from companies planning on putting up new power lines. Recently, we got a message about a proposed radio tower (in the Longview part of the county) across from the Memory Park Cemetery. Tom supplied the needed information. The tower will be on the south side of US80 and there should be no impact on the cemetery.

**Historic Homes.** The City of Marshall is considering the establishment of an new ordinance that would require persons owning historic homes to repair them in order to prevent deterioration. Tom reported that homeowners say that they are postponing repairs because of their uncertainty regarding the city's possible requirements. One example which they cite is what is required when replacing historic fixtures, *e.g.* originals or replicas. It was asked, "Are there tax incentives for people owning historic homes." The answer: if there is a commercial use planned, then "yes" and otherwise "no." It was pointed out that there is a need for a uniform announcement from the city about what is needed and required by both the city and state.

## **J. Publications**

**Waskom Article.** Tom Speir noted that the most recent issue of the *East Texas Historical Journal* has just come out. Tom's survey of Waskom is the last article!

**Stage Coach Trace Signage and Tour Brochure.** There was discussion of the Stagecoach Trace signage. Tom secured the names of two firms recommended by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT). These firms will guarantee their work for 7-10 years. An estimate for sixty signs reveals that they will cost about \$3,500 dollars. Tom will present our budget request to the county in the current amount of \$3,000 but he will request an additional one-time appropriation of \$3500 for the markers. Barbara Judkins noted that she believes the placement and display of the Texas flag on the markers violates the state flag code. It was noted that the design is based on the logo for the county road workers so we will not raise the issue. Gerald Gibson who is spearheading this project noted that once we get the signs we will keep them in storage until we determine exactly which ones need to be replaced and which ones need to be relocated. When that has been determined, we then will do a new booklet for the Stagecoach Trace tour of county sites. Gerry thinks he can produce documentation in a week, but he has not so far been looking at the text. That would be the next step. Gail Beil will work with Gerry on revising the text.

## **K. Tourism**

**Monthly Community Calendar.** Tom Speir shared the monthly community calendar. All organizations are encouraged to share their activities with the 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.

**County Promotion at Texas Travel Center.** Tom reminded the commission that the Texas Travel Center is planning a promotion of Harrison County attractions for Friday May 11<sup>th</sup>. (Barbara Judkins will be there representing the Starr Family Home State Historic Site.)

## **L. Goals**

Tom Speir has contacted the county fire marshal and tried to set up a visit to an historic home but the scheduling fell through. Tom indicated that the property

owner is still interested in receiving the visit. Tom asked for input from commission members regarding any homes that might be scheduled for visits.

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

Our annual preservation awards are scheduled to be presented on Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. in the 1901 Courthouse. Tony Crosby and Ralph Newland will be presenting the Historic Landmarks Preservation Board awards at the same time. A reception will follow at the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Gail will bring some food for the reception. Because he is scheduled for his second cataract surgery the day after the presentation, Tom asked if someone on the commission would volunteer to be the presenter? Bill Whitis stepped forward. Tom noted that the awards have been ordered from Smart Advertising and they should be here this week (or next at the latest). Tom noted that he has not informed the recipients that they are receiving the awards. Bill will need to make the notifications. (It was suggested that this annual presentation be reported to the community calendar which Brenda Dearman prepares.)

## **V. Special Reports**

### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

No report.

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

*Customer Service Representative.* Robert Wood reported events have been developing rapidly at the Depot. There was a two-hour board meeting this morning. Amtrak has made the decision that if a stop boards less than forty passengers a day it will lose its passenger service assistant. The Marshall Depot boards an average of 32-33 passengers a day. There is a huge effort underway to do something about this possible loss of passenger assistance. The City of Marshall has the topic on its agenda tonight. Robert noted that we get a lot of people coming over from Shreveport and northwest Louisiana to board the train and make Amtrak connections. The problem with not having the customer service representative is that it will mean that there will be no one to assist passengers with luggage. Gail Beil moved that a letter asking postponement of the removal of our customer service representative be sent to all federal and state officials. Robert Wood indicated that he has a mailing list that can be used. A motion to send the



letter was passed. Tom asked that someone draft the letter so he will know what to say and also send it to Bill Whitis to have it put on our Facebook page. Tom noted that he will send out the letter and plans to go to the office twice a week in spite of personal considerations.

**Renovations.** Robert Wood reported that all construction work on the depot renovations is complete. The new elevator is finally working!

**Fundraiser.** Robert also expressed the Depot's appreciation for the great support of the fundraiser at the Ginnochio. In terms of success it scored in the top 99%.

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

Barbara Judkins reported that "wind chime making" is on track for July. The home hit a snag with the very beautiful stove purchased for the kitchen. It cannot be lighted because of danger it would certainly crack. (It turns out that it was retrieved from a field and refurbished to look nice but not be functional.) It will be replaced with a less beautiful one that can be fired. She also noted that the home is experiencing success with scheduling the use of the Blake House for small events. She is still seeking to arrange a cooperative event with the quilt ladies at Saint Joseph's Catholic Church.

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

Tom reported that he had received an email from Bonnie Strauss indicating that her work on behalf of the Michelson with the schools would prevent her presence.

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

Tom Speir noted the HLPB awards will be presented along with those of our commission on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **VI. Other**

No report.

## **VII. Administrative**

**Communications.** Various correspondence has been received. Our budget request is being submitted as per the action at this meeting (*see IV.J. Publications,*

*Stagecoach Trace ...*, page 7, above). Please submit any events to Brenda Dearman's community calendar.

**Facebook Page.** As always, we need photos for our Facebook page. Bill is doing an excellent job on keeping it updated.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be June 14<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**