

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

June 14th 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, Ann Brannon, Susan Spears, and Gail Beil.

Visitors Present: Doc Halliday and Bonnie Straus.

Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on June 14th 2018 at 1:30 p.m. in the lobby of the Amtrak Depot and welcomed all to the meeting. (Note: The elevator to the T&P Depot Museum's third floor Conference Room was down for routine maintenance.)

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of May 10th 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	14,539.08
Friends of the HCHC Fund	2,192.72

Tom Speir provided an update on the financial records of the Commission; our expenses show \$1,638 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 \$1,362.

Tom announced that he has found another house in which to live. It is located in Longview and he will be able to commute. He will not be able to spend as much time physically in the office, but otherwise he will be able to continue normal duties as chair.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Recording Archeological Sites.

Tom Speir reported that his house search and upcoming move have prevented him from recording any archeological sites since our last meeting.

B. Archives

At the last meeting, Tom Speir reported on his donation of a bookcase to our office and that it was filled with archeological research materials. He plans to go through the collection of materials and pass on to the area Texas Parks & Wildlife Cultural Resource Manager all the reports that have nothing to do with East Texas. (The manager will come by our office the next time he is in the area and pick up these materials.)

C. Cemeteries

Marshall Hebrew Cemetery. The Marshall Hebrew Cemetery has been officially designated by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) as a Texas Historic Cemetery. It has decided to purchase the medallion from THC to display along with its historical marker.

Restoration Work Completed. Ann Brannon reported that the work done by Rusty Brenner and his Texas Cemetery Restoration crew has been completed at the Greenwood, Hebrew, and Marshall cemeteries. (*Note: The work at Greenwood, etc. is the current phase. More work is needed and will probably be scheduled sometime in the future.*)

King of Scotland Relative. Bill Whitis noted that a recent television program had called attention to our having a descendant buried in Marshall of Richard the Bruce, the first king of Scotland. His name is William McDonald Bruce and he and his entire family are buried in Greenwood Cemetery in unmarked graves. Bill believes that the graves should be marked, especially since such public attention has been called to them.

Markers for Confederate Graves. Ann Brannon indicated that three more markers for the graves of Confederate soldiers have arrived and are at Meadowbrook Funeral Home awaiting their installation.

D. Education

Tom Speir reported that due to his recent cataract surgeries and the complications from the first one, there has not been time available to organize our presence and sharing with the upcoming meeting this month of the Region VII Conference of Social Studies Teachers. Therefore there will be no table with brochures and handouts this year.

E. Historical Markers

Marshall as the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie. Gail Beil reported that the dedication for the Boogie Woogie marker and the reinstallation of the Texas and Pacific Railroad marker will be held on Sunday September 2nd at 2:30 p.m. The Boogie Woogie marker will go on the Hotel Ginnocchio (west) side of the tunnel entrance to the depot so that it can have the depot in the background. The T&P marker will be relocated to the east side of the entrance where it will have the T&P engine and caboose in the background. Tom Speir asked who had been consulted about the positioning of the Boogie Woogie marker. Gail was unsure who had made the decision but thought that Jack Redmon, Butler Construction, and Alan Loudermilk may have been involved. Bill Whitis shared a communication from Jack Canson who is very opposed to the scheduling of the dedication of the Boogie Woogie marker on the 2nd of September (Labor Day weekend). Gail Beil noted that the City of Marshall is clearing the area to the east of the paved parking lot. The clearing will extend under the Bolivar Street viaduct. Once it is cleared the city plans to put down crushed gravel which will provide an extension of the parking lot for use whenever events are held there in celebration of Boogie Woogie music. She noted that annual Boogie Woogie festivals are being planned and that such

festivals will need to share the lot with its regular users, *i.e.*, for Amtrak customers. (Reminder: the city owns this parking lot.)

Elks Club Building Marker. Gail asked where the marker for the old Elks Club building is, noting that it should have been shipped to Jerry Cargile. Someone needs to confirm that he received it, she suggested.

F. History Museum

Thanks. Jean Birmingham reported that the summer day camp, “History Rocks,” is ongoing and doing well. She thanked all for their support of the programs of the history museum.

First Harrison County Man Killed in WWI. Thomas Richardson asked if the museum had information on the first man from the county who was killed in World War I. He will check with Gerry Gibson to locate any information.

Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library. Ann Brannon reported briefly on the museum’s efforts to find a new home for its research library. Tom Speir noted that he has found some old artifacts recovered at the Confederate Powder Mill location and has them at the commission office and will contribute them to the museum when the research collection is finally able to settle into a new home. (*Note:* These artifacts were in storage and were originally recovered during the 1996 Field School.) Along that line, Ann Brannon reported that Bill Sullivan has agreed to donate the old Sullivan and Rains & Talley funeral home records to the collection once there is a place for them.

G. Information Technology

Tom Speir reported that Bill Whitis is doing a great job of seeing that our links are working and our minutes posted. Bill reported that we have gained another 22 friends on our Facebook page. He provided a listing of upcoming posts scheduled for the page which provide an example of the ways in which he continues to attract new friends to the site. Some of the postings include: Elmo Bass Sr. and his wife Sudie Mae who were the owners of the first brick home in Hallsville; Dr. Matthew Dogan, the seventh president of Wiley College in Marshall; Samuel Arestous Birmingham the first African-American Marshall city commissioner; Martin Beaunorus Tolson, Wiley College professor and coach of the “Great Debaters;” Nathaniel Currier Matthewson, a local pharmacist and entrepreneur; and the opening of the first Neely’s restaurant in Marshall.

H. Oral History

Oral History Workshop. The “Oral History Workshop for Beginners” was held on June 9th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Barbara Judkins reported that there were four in attendance. It was regretted that, while we had extensive early promotion of the event, there were no late reminders. Barbara has the powerpoint presentation for future use. Tom Speir reiterated that we are still looking for somebody to do the actual interviewing.

I. Preservation

Marshall Central Fire Station Bell. Robert Wood reported that the Marshall Lions Club just approved a donation of \$9,000 to the Marshall Fire Department for installation of a historic bell that may have been used in the Central Station when it was located downtown. It will be installed at the current Marshall Central Station on South Garrett.

Port Caddo Historical Marker Location. On June 7th there was a conference at Caddo Lake State Park where the Port Caddo historical marker is currently located. However, the actual site of Port Caddo is not in the Park but in the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge at the location of the former pumping station for Thiokol Chemical Corporation. It was noted that Federal money is available to set up trails and signs for heritage trails in the refuge but not for any additional purchase of land. However, the pumping station location belongs to the Wildlife Refuge. The plan is to move the marker from the Park to the Refuge where it will correctly celebrate the true location of the Port.

J. Publications

Waskom Article. Marty reported that she had purchased two copies of the recent *East Texas Historical Journal* with Tom Speir’s article about Waskom in it. She presented a copy to the Waskom Mayor and the town library.

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. Tom noted that the

Oral History Workshop and the History Rocks Day Camp were included in this month's listing.

National Geographic Latin America. Barbara Judkins reported that the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau had recently hosted a writer from the National Geographic Latin America Division.

Convention and Visitors Bureau Changes. Barbara Judkins reported that Carolyn Howard is no longer director of the Marshall CVB. Also, the CVB is moving into the Weisman Building. It will be located on the side opposite from Central Perks.

KMHT's "Talk of East Texas." Robert Wood reminded all present that KMHT radio station is looking for people to share information about community events on its "The Talk of East Texas" daily broadcasts and that we should take advantage of the opportunity whenever possible. Barbara Judkins reported that persons interested in being included on the program should just call the station and ask for "Phyllis."

L. Goals

Historic Homes Fire Inspections. Tom Speir reported that the county fire marshal is still willing to participate in visits to historic homes in the county but scheduling continues to be a problem. Tom asked for input from commission members regarding any homes that might be scheduled for visits.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

Presentations. Tom Speir thanked Bill Whitis for making the award presentations at the 1901 Courthouse on Sunday, May 20th.

THC Preservation Awards. Tom Speir encouraged commission members to nominate local people for the state-wide awards given each year. The deadline for 2018 submissions is July 13th and the winners will be decided at the THC's October Quarterly Meeting. More details are available at the THC website. The listing of available awards is as follows:

- Governor's Award for Historic Preservation
- Ruth Lester Lifetime Achievement Award
- John Ben Sheppard County Historical Commission Leadership Award
- George Christian Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award
- John L. Nau, III, Award of Excellence in Museums
- Curtis D. Tunnell Lifetime Achievement Award in Archeology
- Anice B. Read Award of Excellence in Community Heritage Development

THC Award of Excellence in Preserving History
THC Award of Excellence in Historic Architecture
THC Award of Excellence in Media Achievement
Award of Merit

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

T&P Shops. The museum has recently come into possession of film footage of the fire which destroyed the T&P shops in the 1970s. Barbara Judkins suggested that the films be shared with the Texas Archive of the Moving Image in the hope that this state-supported private entity can digitize them. (This process would not involve any expense but would require that the images continue to be available through the organization.) With regard to the T&P shops, Robert reported that the Gullion family had donated \$15,000 to build an HO scale diorama of the former shops for the museum's exhibits. (In that connection, it was noted that all of Wesley Jones' models of local buildings have been placed in the lobby. The museum is planning to add a background photo of the Peter Whetstone Square to this relocated exhibit.)

Customer Service Representative. Robert Wood reminded all present that it is still not too late to sign the petition asking Amtrak to retain the Customer Service Representative position at the Marshall station. He noted that a recent walk-through of the parking lot revealed that there were nine cars with Louisiana license plates indicating the usage of the station by our neighbors across the state line.

Physical Plant/Renovations. Robert noted that Amtrak had completed its walkthrough of the construction work at the depot and workers today are busy doing final adjustments. He also noted that the elevator in the depot shuts itself down automatically at the end of 2000 trips to signal that it needs routine maintenance and that is why it is not working today.

C. Starr Family Home State Historic Site

Kitchen Stove. Barbara Judkins reported that the site continues to work on its restoration project in the service area. The non-functioning wood stove has been

removed from the kitchen and shipped back to the supplier who is sending a replacement (not as pretty but capable of being used) which the staff hope to fire up in August. “Do come by and see the kitchen,” she urged.

Super Summer Friday Nights. The first of the Super Summer Friday Nights is coming up tomorrow. Happily, outside people will come and setup and take down the water slide.

Staff Changes. Megan Maxwell will be moving to Memphis after ten years of faithful service. Barbara expects to be able to hire a person to do educational programs.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Bonnie Strauss and Susan Spears were present and spoke about the work of the Michelson Museum. Bonnie reported that you can now go on line and see the next exhibit which is on watercolors. Susan reported that the Michelson did the Wednesday morning part of the “History Rocks” Day Camp organized by the History Museum. The Michelson, Susan emphasized, “loved having the kids that morning.” Summer art classes have started. One focuses on Curious George. Both classes are for those 12 years and older and provide an opportunity for the participants to paint with adult supervision.

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB)

Preservation Texas Meeting in August. Tony Crosby asked that emphasis be given to the Preservation Texas regional meeting which will be held in Nacogdoches in August. Its emphasis will be on African-American history and related architecture.

VI. Other

Quorum.

Tom Speir reported that the Texas Historical Commission (THC) has questioned our observance of a quorum at our meetings. Richard Magrill responded that for at least a quarter century we have operated under the same definition of what constitutes a quorum — both our 1990 and 2015 bylaws state: “The duly appointed members attending any meeting, whether regular or called, of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.” He noted that in each instance, these bylaws were approved and recommended by the Historical Commission after a lengthy process and mature deliberation and were adopted by the Harrison County

Commissioners' Court and that it is our right to establish our own definition of what constitutes a quorum and our definition has served us well.

Following our meeting, Richard prepared a table of our attendance figures (*below*) taken from the minutes. He does not have records indicating the total number of members in any of the years given except for the current three-year membership (2017-2019). It is likely that the lowest attendance numbers for each of the seventeen years might represent less than a quorum by the definition of some other organizations. We have always met the requirement of the state law mandating that we have at least seven members.

With regard to the table, some of our current members who are unable to attend were very faithful at the beginning of the century and they maintain an active interest, communicating any concerns they may have by correspondence. Other more recent members currently on the roll have work situations that prevent their regular attendance but they engage in extensive work for the interests of the commission. Any attempt to change our definition of a quorum and remove from our roll interested parties who have difficulty attending meetings, Richard believes will carry the significant risk of declining interest, aborted meetings, and less participation.

Historical Commission Attendance in the 21st Century

Line 1 = year, Line 2 = high, Line 3 = low, Line 4 = average

'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18
24	20	21	17	15	12	14	14	12	14	11	12	12	11	14	12	11	12
14	12	9	8	9	7	7	6	8	6	7	5	6	5	8	5	8	8
16	16	15	12	12	9	10	9	10	7	9	8	9	8	10	9	9	10

Note: One reason that attendance in the first five years (above) was higher may have been due both to a larger membership and the fact that there were speakers on topics of interest.

VII. Administrative

Communications. Tom Speir reported that we have received the latest edition of *The Medallion* along with various correspondence. He reminded us to submit any events to Brenda Dearman's community calendar.

THC Award. Our annual award will be presented at the Harrison County Commissioners' Court on Monday June 25th and all members are encouraged to be present.

East Texas Historical Association Meeting. The East Texas Historical Association fall meeting will be held in Nacogdoches on October 11th -13th. Tom has information on lodging and registration. Gail Beil will make a powerpoint presentation on C.G. Lancaster.

Civil War Symposium. The 7th annual Jefferson Civil War Symposium will be held on August 7th.

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 July 12th 2018 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill