

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
September 13th 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, Becky Palmer, Ann Brannon, Marty Vaughan, Robert Wood, and Gail Beil.

Visitor(s) Present: Christina Anderson and Gerald Gibson.

I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on September 13th 2018 at 1:31 p.m. in the conference room of the T&P Depot Museum.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of August 9th 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	7,535.31
Friends of the HCHC Fund	3,292.96

Tom Speir reported on the financial records of the Commission. Our expenses showed \$2,318 spent of the \$3,000 included in the county budget for the fiscal year running from October 2017 through October 2018, leaving a balance of \$682.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Texas Archeology Month. Tom Speir reminded us that October, which is Texas Archeology Month, will soon be here and asked that any events which are planned for the month be submitted as soon as possible. We hope to coordinate events with Barbara Judkins. (For Starr Home Archeology Month events see **V.C. Starr Family Home State Historic Site** page 8 below.)

Moderator/Regulator Conflict. Saturday November 10th Bill O'Neal will speak on the Moderator/Regulator Conflict in the courtroom of the 1901 Courthouse.

Granger School. Gerald Gibson has found a possible location of the Granger School near General Cable on US80. If the location turns out to be correct, it will be recorded as a Texas Archeological Site.

Texas Archeological Society. The 89th Texas Archeological Society meeting is scheduled for October 26th - 28th.

B. Archives

Tom Speir reported that there is still much work to be done in filing and organizing the commission's archives.

C. Cemeteries

Wiley College Cemetery. Bill Whitis has located, in our archives, a plot map of the Wiley College Cemetery. He noted that there are graves located under an existing burn pile and others that are located on the edge of a pond.

Saint Joseph's Cemetery. Bill reported that Saint Joseph's Catholic Church is looking to fence their new cemetery expansion but there is a sliver of land they do not own.

Property Lines. Apropos of the Saint Joseph problem, Gerald Gibson noted that there is a new smart phone app which tells you when you cross property lines. It is called onxmaps.com and if limited to one state costs \$29 a year.

Granbury Cemetery. Bill Whitis also noted that he has started a file for the Granbury Cemetery.

Cemetery Cleanups. Tom Speir asked if there were any cemetery cleanups scheduled for this fall which should be publicized. No one indicated any awareness of such cleanups.

Greenwood Cemetery. Robert Wood called attention to the little trees growing near stones in Greenwood Cemetery. Richard Magrill suggested asking East Texas Baptist University if it might be possible to clear them with students who were interested in service to community. (It would also improve the immediate environs of the university itself since Greenwood Cemetery adjoins the campus.) Ann Brannon will check on this possibility.

Cemetery Signs regarding Burials. Tom Speir reported that we will act later on the expenditure, but 12"x18" signs have been designed. They will have "NOTICE" in red letters above and "For information about burials please contact a Harrison County funeral home" below. Each sign will cost \$16 and we anticipate an order for 37. Bill Whitis reported that Marshall Monument has contacted him. They have been erecting monuments at Greenwood Cemetery without notice but they will now contact Bill before erecting them.

Fall Cemetery Tours. Bill Whitis noted that personal concerns have prevented his working on the planning for the fall tours right now. Tom Speir agreed that he will contact Barbara Judkins and see what can be accomplished regarding the tours.

Accessibility of Graves. Bill Whitis noted that if he has put a site on Find-a-grave, then it can be visited. However, not all cemetery locations have been made public at the request of family members and property owners, but the vast majority are public and on Find-a-grave.

Athens Church Cemetery. Bill also reported that Athens Church Cemetery is trying to secure Historic Texas Cemetery status and using interviews to secure information.

D. Education

History Fair. January 19th will be the next county-wide History Fair. Tom Speir reported that we can hold the fair again at the Marshall Junior High School but Sharon Dews hopes to move the location around the county to other Independent School Districts. Sharon has already generated packets. Tom is communicating with all ISDs and Trinity School. Gail Beil mentioned the Marshall Christian Academy. National History Day theme for 2019 is "Triumph and Tragedy in History."

E. Historical Markers

Marshall: The Birthplace of Boogie Woogie. Gail Beil reported that the marker dedication was “a roaring success.” The annual Boogie Woogie Festival is now planned for Friday thru Sunday on the third weekend in May beginning next year.

Fred Lewis Marker. We believe the application for the Fred Lewis marker to be placed at the Starr Family Home State Historic Site is in process. Tom Speir asked Gail Beil to contact Barbara Judkins about it.

Wiley College Markers. Gail Beil indicated that she has talked with Wiley College to see if they are pursuing the Coach “Pop” Long application. We have approximately two and a half months to get this year’s applications submitted. There was no report on the work toward a marker application for Lawrence Aaron Nixon who mounted the successful court challenge to the all-white primary system in Texas.

Winston Taylor Home. Gene Nems Builders is working on the Winston-Taylor home in Waskom. It has a Stagecoach Trace marker, but it is not on the National Register. Gail Beil noted that it looks older than it really is.

Young’s Mill Pond/Bishop College. In connection with the Young’s Mill Pond and Bishop College markers, Tom Speir noted that we have received the proposed texts from THC.

Trammel’s Trace. Tom Speir noted that Gary Pinkerton believes that Pope City Road and Owens Corner Road are on Trammel’s Trace in the Woodlawn area. He would like to see a marker there since it would be on the actual Trace. FM1793 crosses Pope City Road and Tom has contacted the area engineer of TxDOT and he thinks the marker could be placed at the triangle or the SWEPCO installation without the need for a turnout. Tom does not know who might pay for it. He has contacted the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in Austin about the possibility of it being an “Undertold Story” marker.

“Undertold Story” Applications. In the past, “Undertold Story” applications could be made at any time. Now applications can only be made from May 1st to June 1st. Possible markers for the Barrymore Incident (March 19th 1879 murder of Maurice Barrymore), for Waskom (as the Gateway to Texas), and for the Trammel’s Trace route through the county might all fall in this category.

Elks Club/Hallsville Bank. Tom Speir noted that we are waiting for text on Old Elks Club Building and Hallsville Bank markers.

James Farmer, Jr. Statue. There was discussion of the work toward erecting a statue of James Farmer, Jr. on the western portion of the lawn of the 1901 Courthouse. (*Note:* James Farmer, Jr. was a noted Civil Rights activist and Marshall native.) Richard Magrill, Christina Anderson, and others asked about the proposed committee to draft a policy. Tom Speir indicated that another county's policy has been secured and he has cut and pasted it into a draft for our County Commission which is waiting for an action item. Tom will email a copy to Gail Beil and Christina Anderson. He emphasized that it is very generic. Gail noted that she is still after George Foreman to be the honorary chairman of the drive to raise funds for the erection of the statue.

F. Historical Museum

Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library. The search continues for a building to house the Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library.

Fall Lunch Topics. Becky Palmer provided flyers and posters for the Museum's lunches next month. On October 11th Rose Mary Magrill and Fran Hurley will speak on Rosborough Springs where society went out in force and had a good time. On October 25th Daryl Ware will be the speaker and share his research on Harrison County's many railroads. The \$15 donation for each lunch benefits the Museum's Children's Education Program.

Barrymore Incident. Gail Beil reported that the Museum wants to do big things regarding the Barrymore Incident (the March 19th 1879 shooting of Maurice Barrymore and murder of fellow actor Ben Porter who were shot by a notorious fighter and bully named Jim Currie at the White House Saloon) including staging a trial in the 1901 Courthouse. There is someone interested in doing a play with a multi-race cast. It is conceivable that a train porter might be the narrator. The Museum would promote the play in the way that Jefferson promotes its Diamond Bessy Murder Trial.

G. Information Technology

Bill Whitis reported our minutes are being posted to the county website on a regular basis and that another fifty followers/new friends have liked our Facebook page. In his travels he is trying to find stories for our page. If you know of subjects for stories especially involving parts of the county other than Marshall please let him know.

H. Oral History

Tom Speir indicated that nothing is being done with the commission's equipment in the area of oral history and asked that we be on the lookout for any potential volunteers. Gerald Gibson reported that he had met a young lady on August 9th in Nacogdoches who is proposing to do oral history of ex-slave families in Harrison County. He also reported that the Athens Church Cemetery is trying to get Historic Texas Cemetery status through gathering recollections from a nonagenarian.

I. Preservation

Stagecoach Road. Tom Speir reported that he had made his annual contact with John Paul Jones, County Road and Bridge Supervisor, about one dump truck load of dirt and gravel being added to Stagecoach Road as an improvement and for its preservation.

National Preservation Institute (NPI) Seminars. Tom Speir reminded all of the upcoming NPI seminars to be held in Austin during October. On the 22nd -23rd there is a seminar on "Conservation Strategies for Archeologists" and on the 24th - 26th there will be a seminar on "Archeological Curation and Collections Management."

J. Publications

Reprint. Gail Beil has talked to Carol Morris Little about reproducing a volume of *Historic Harrison County as Preserved through Official Historical Markers*. Carol is not amenable to corrections and editorial changes in the volume she has already done and has no interest in doing another volume. Richard Magrill questioned whether the existing volume's title was accurate since only selected historical markers were included. Gail still envisions a volume 1 and volume 2. Richard Magrill will send Gail a current chronological list of markers in the county. She will work on a proposed volume 2, but she indicated that she plans to include only Registered Texas Historic Landmarks not subject markers. As to who will do the final work, that is still unknown. Finally, Gail reported that when Bill Whitis discovered that the Print Shop could not do the reprint, he secured a bid from another printer which was \$4,375 dollars. Gail indicated that she will try to get a \$5K grant to do the reprint.

K. Tourism

Pop-Up Sign. Marty Vaughan will take our sign to use in a display for Waskom's night out.

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 (bdearman8@gmail.com), a retired music professor from East Texas Baptist University.

L. Goals

Tom Speir has contacted Greg Smith who is with THC. Greg is coming to Marshall to discuss the possibility of a historic district. While here he will do a workshop on national register submissions.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

There was no report on our awards, but Gail Beil indicated that she is still working on nominating Alan Loudermilk for an appropriate THC award for his work in preserving the Ginnochio Hotel.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

Christina Anderson provided a Powerpoint review of work on the 1901 Courthouse. (For a more extensive report, see our minutes of October 12th 2017, pages 8-16.) Christina is the president of the Harrison County Development Authority which oversees the endowment set up to assist the county in the maintenance of the 1901 Courthouse. The HCDA is investigating a possible new fishscale roof which may cost about \$83,000. The commission had questions about the possible installation of handrails on the exterior steps in order to aid those entering and exiting the building.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

T&P Shops Fire. Tom Speir reported that the cost of digitizing the Marshall Fire Department's pictures from the T&P shops fire will only be \$64. Kathy Wright will pick up the photos from the MFD and have them processed.

Other matters. Robert Wood reported that the Boogie Woogie marker dedication had been successfully accomplished and the marker looks fine in its location between the Depot entrance and the Ginnochio Hotel entrance. The new elevator is back up and running. Its problem was caused by the a/c unit installed to keep the equipment cool. In fact, the unit kept things too cool and moisture accumulated and affected the computer controlling the elevator. Now a dehumidifier has been installed and the problem is solved. A ticket kiosk has also been installed and a gate around the elevator. Robert reported that the Marshall Lions Club will probably pay for an accordion-style gate which will cost about \$450.

C. Starr Family Home State Historic Site

Victorian Fair. Barbara Judkins sent a notice for Texas Archeology Month's 2018 Calendar of Events regarding the Starr Home's Annual Victorian Fair. This year the fair is on November 3rd. The outdoor event is free and open to the public. Guests will enjoy 19th century toys and games, viewing living history demonstrations, including blacksmith Keith Coleman, and making their own old-time crafts. The Rusk County Dulcimers, led by Tom Loomis, will return again this year to play their Mountain Dulcimers for event guests. The group's repertoire includes old gospel, folk, country, and patriotic songs. Maplecroft, the 1870 home of Frank and Clara Starr will be available for tours. 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.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Currently on exhibit at the Michelson are still photographs (mostly black and white) from the making of the miniseries "Lonesome Dove" (based on the book by Larry McMurtrie).

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB)

Former First Presbyterian Church Property. Gail Beil reported that the Marshall City Commission had approved making the two plots containing the old First Presbyterian Church building a locally designated historic property which has the effect of making the site permanently exempt from property taxes.

VI. Other

Nothing was reported under this category.

VII. Administrative

Miscellaneous. Tom Speir reported on incoming mail. Various items have been received. He noted that we will postpone any decision on where our pop-up sign might be routinely displayed until the work on relocating the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau Office to the Wiseman Center is completed.

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

Spending Decision. On motion, the commission will spend the money remaining in its budget on generic signs for cemeteries in the county aimed at guiding persons who wish to determine the proper procedures for burials.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be October 11th 2018 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill