

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

November 8th 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, Jean Birmingham, Ann Brannon, Barbara Judkins, Becky Palmer, Gail Beil, Thomas Richardson, and Robert Wood.

Visitor(s) Present: Clemmie Copeland, Betsy Cadenhead, and Jesse Snowden.

New Members Being Recommended: Tom Speir shared the list of five new members who he is recommending to the County Judge for appointment to the Historical Commission in January: Barbara Cox, the librarian at Sam Houston Elementary School in Marshall, will assist Sharon Dews with the history fair and try to get subscriptions to *The Medallion* for all the school libraries in the county; Helen Murray is in charge of Sabine Farms; Betsy Cadenhead has attended Texas Archaeological Society workshops and digs and may help Gerry Gibson with the Rosenwald Schools locations; Clemmie Copeland is head of the Harrison County Retired Teachers' Association; and Gerry Gibson is engaged in ongoing research on many historic topics, especially the Rosenwald Schools.

I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on November 8th 2018 at 1:28 p.m. in the conference room of the T&P Depot Museum.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of October 11th 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:

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|--------------------------|-------------|
| Brokerage account | \$ 5,552.97 |
| Certificate of deposit | 3,300.00 |
| Certificate of deposit | 7,075.12 |
| Greenwood Cemetery Fund | 7,477.69 |
| Friends of the HCHC Fund | 3,235.00 |

Tom Speir reported on the financial records of the Commission. Our expenses showed that we have spent \$500 for generic burial advice cemetery signs from the new \$3,000 included in the county budget for the fiscal year running from October 2018 through October 2019.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Ongoing Projects. Tom Speir reminded us that we have several big ongoing projects such as the Rosenwald Schools listing, finding the locations of known springs, and the locations of every known community in the county. He has prepared an individual file on each of these communities but there are still others to be added. These files include map references and Tom requests that others add details of what was there in the communities (like mills, gins, etc.). Thomas Richardson mentioned that the Collins Point community was north of Hallsville and the school was pretty active. Tom noted that Gerry Gibson has compiled a list of about 135 county schools that existed between 1919 and 1928-29. In particular, he would like to know if others have details of the community known as Hughes Spring which was one of the five known "freedom colonies."

B. Archives

Tom Speir noted that there is still paperwork in the office to be filed and requested that any who would be willing to help make arrangements to meet him there. He also expressed thanks to Bill Whitis who has been in to help!

C. Cemeteries

New Generic Signs Regarding Burials. Tom passed around a sample of our new cemetery signs which are available to any county cemetery desiring them. The

signs indicate that persons contact any county funeral home before performing a burial.

Fall Cemetery Tour. Bill Whitis reported that the fall cemetery tour of the Ewing Chapel Cemetery went well. There was not a huge turnout (maybe twenty including the presenters). However, it was felt that having only one cemetery on the tour should be the pattern for future events.

Pope City Cemetery/Pope Cemetery. Bill reported that the folks concerned with the Pope City Cemetery have applied for it to be recognized as a Texas Historic Cemetery. Bill also noted that they say the cemetery is all white, but it is not.

Greenwood Cemetery. Ann Brannon reported that the bust of Stella Ginnochio which was a part of her monument is missing and that it has been so since at least 2009. Ann did report its theft to the Marshall Police Department. Robert Wood said that he would contact them as well. After all, he noted, we did get the Stagecoach Road marker back from Colorado years after its theft. Ann also reported that she still has the unidentified bone from Greenwood in her pantry.

Saint Joseph's Cemetery. Saint Joseph's Catholic Church is putting up a fence around the new part of its cemetery (with a gap where there is a sliver of property which it does not yet own. The church also wants to purchase property at the southern boundary of the cemetery. However, its purchase and inclusion in the cemetery may be prevented by a new state law putting a moratorium on the expansion of cemeteries within the incorporated limits of cities.

Ham Cemetery. The Ham Cemetery has been found. It is in terrible condition. There is one readable marker. Ham Cemetery is located off a now unattended road called Summers Road, which is off of Kings Road, south down Pinecrest/TX43 as you head towards Grange Hall. The Hams owned land on the east side of the road, the Fishers owned land on the west – the two families had various marriages between them. Two local (living) descendants of these people are Rutledge McClaran and Pete McCarty.

D. Education

History Fair. Tom Speir reported that the date for the Marshall Independent School District (ISD) History Fair is closing in on us. January 19th will be the next county-wide fair. We will be looking for judges. It will be at Marshall Junior High School again since, although it is countywide, only the Marshall ISD is participating. Next year we plan to get information about the fair out during the

summer to the other ISDs. We have reached out to Trinity Episcopal School but have not heard back. Bill Whitis has put a notice about the History Fair on our Facebook page. Gail Beil volunteered to be a judge. Tom noted that the more judges we get the lighter the work load will be. Becky Palmer has already had one student come to the Historical Museum looking for a project. Sharon Dews is doing a fantastic job with the fair. National History Day theme for 2019 is “Triumph and Tragedy in History.”

E. Historical Markers

Fred Lewis. Barbara Judkins reported that she will work on competing the application very soon for the Fred Lewis marker which will be placed on the Starr Family Home State Historic Site. Permission has been given to locate the marker on the site.

C.G. Lancaster. Gail Beil reported that the fee for the C.G. Lancaster application has been waved by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) since it is a re-application. Gail noted that the City of Marshall, which is paying for the marker, does not want a post since the plan is to mount the marker on City Hall.

Bishop College. Tom Speir reported that the text of the Bishop College marker has been approved. It is now in line to be cast.

Port Caddo. Tom also reported that the Port Caddo marker is to be left in its position inside the Caddo Lake State Park at this time. He indicated that a whole new essay for a new marker related to Port Caddo needs to be prepared because we now know so much more about it. This marker can be located in a spot where there would not be an entry fee in order to view it.

Trammel’s Trace. The marker for Trammel’s Trace is on hold. We will wait and see if Gary Pinkerton can come up with someone to pay for it. The idea of it being an “undertold story” has been declined due to the number of other markers in the state celebrating the history of the Trace. However, it was noted that our proposed marker would be the first (or at least the second) actually on the Trace itself.

James Farmer, Jr. Statue. There was no report on the work toward erecting a statue of James Farmer, Jr. on the western portion of the lawn of the 1901 Courthouse continues. (*Note: James Farmer, Jr. was a noted Civil Rights activist and Marshall native.*)

Monuments on County Property. Tom Speir indicated that County Judge Hugh Taylor has asked where we are on recommending policy for monuments

erected and/or proposed for erection on county property. Tom indicated that it was his position that the policy should not limit monuments to exclusively war/military related memorials. He will prepare the draft of a policy patterned after the one adopted by Van Zandt County. He has asked the assistance of Richard and Christina Anderson. We need to get the wording correct. Judge Taylor and the County Court feel that the policy is needed and needs broad support.

Wall of Remembrance. The “Wall of Remembrance” which used to be a part of the 1901 Courthouse grounds was discussed. (The wall was a Historical Museum effort.) It is in storage. Where should it be placed? It is not a pressing issue, but questions regarding it occasionally come up among researchers.

“Undertold Story Markers.” Tom Speir noted that the annual deadline for applications for “undertold story” markers is March 1st.

F. Historical Museum

Moderator/Regulator Conflict. Jean Birmingham deferred to Becky Palmer who reminded us that Bill O’Neal will speak on the Moderator/Regulator Conflict in the courtroom of the 1901 Courthouse on November 10th. She also reminded us that O’Neal’s *War in East Texas* will be reprinted and that he is always an interesting speaker and that she looking forward to Saturday. “Come early for good seating,” she cautioned.

Collins Academy Junior Historians. Becky reported that the Collins Academy Junior Historians are coming over from Jefferson to visit the Museum on November 15th.

Military Exhibits. Becky also reported that the Museum’s military exhibits are now being installed in Marshall’s Memorial City Hall and they are looking really great. The date for when the space will be open to the public, however, is still not known.

Charles Frazier. Tom Speir added that he had gotten a phone call from Will Lawrence of Hill County. Charles Frazier was the first Hill County judge. We have recently gotten a copy of some information about him from a daughter.

Harrison County Genealogical Society. It was noted that the Harrison County Genealogical Society, which had ceased meeting, is being revived and will meet next Tuesday afternoon at 12:45 p.m. in the jury room of the 1901 Courthouse to reorganize.

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

G. Information Technology

Bill Whitis reported that he is still doing little stories like an upcoming one on Armistice Day. Let him know what you would like to see on the Facebook site. He noted that the Historical Museum has a PayPal donation link on its internet site and he suggested that we investigate the possibility of adding that feature to ours. Tom Speir suggested we may need a separate Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission Facebook page in order to have that feature because having it on our county site would be problematic.

H. Oral History

Bill Whitis will see if Carl Sperier can be interviewed about his life here in Marshall. Tom Speir repeated that we have the equipment and people to interview but no interviewers.

I. Preservation

Freedom Communities. We have located three Freedom Communities but not Lott and Hughes Spring which are considered to be in the county. Lee, Nesbitt and Piney Ridge are the other three whose sites have been found.

Preservation Crisis. Gail Beil reported that the James Turner House at 406 South Washington in Marshall which is on the National Register is in danger of being condemned.

National Register Workshop. Tom Speir reminded us that he has contacted Greg Smith, who is with the THC, concerning his conducting a workshop on how to place buildings on the National Register when he comes to Marshall to discuss the possibility of a Historic District in downtown.

Bishop Blue. Tom also reported that the Bishop Blue organization which seeks to preserve the memory, memorabilia and documents of Bishop College is looking for a curator for their artifacts. They are wanting to create some traveling exhibits. They have taken an old building behind East Texas Baptist University which was the home of a Bishop faculty member, Jesse Phillips, and are trying to make it usable.

Stagecoach Road. The county reports that a load of cement has been put on Stagecoach Road to help with its maintenance.

Longhorn Army Ordinance Plant. The question of plans for the preservation of the history of the Longhorn Army Ordinance Plant was raised.

J. Publications

Reprint. Gail Beil reported that some interest by the Summerlee Foundation has been expressed in providing the funds for reprinting the Carol Morris Little book, *Historic Harrison County as Preserved through Official Historical Markers*. Gail has asked Summerlee for \$5,000 for this project.

K. Tourism

Hallsville Sesquicentennial. Tom Speir reported that he has talked with Carol Greer about the Hallsville Sesquicentennial which will be observed next year. Tom assured her that our Commission will try to help promote this event.

Boogie Woogie Festival. Tom also noted that the first annual Boogie Woogie Festival is scheduled for the third weekend in May in 2019. It will begin on Friday night. The Saturday activities will end with a street dance. At 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, there will be a gospel fest. The City of Marshall will raise the funds for this event.

Monthly Community Calendar. Tom encouraged all organizations 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. Marty Vaughan noted that she had sent a list of upcoming events planned for Waskom. Tom remarked that the current calendar contains an increasing list of events.

L. Goals

Inspection of Old Homes in County. Tom Speir reported that the County Fire Marshall is willing to make inspections. We are just waiting for someone to say they know someone who is willing to take advantage of this service. We are reaching out county wide.

Stagecoach Trace Signs. Tom also reported that the proposed new Stagecoach Trace signs are on hold until May when the new county budgeting process begins and we will again try to secure budgeted funds for this project.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

Tom Speir reported that 2019 Honor Awards of Preservation Texas are open for submissions and offered the official form for use by any who might wish to make nominations. Robert Wood accepted the form. Tom reminded us that we

needed to be thinking about possible recipients for our own awards to be given next spring.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

Robert Wood reported that Santa is coming. Gail Beil noted that “breakfast with Santa” is scheduled for December 1st and that the “casino night” fundraiser was a roaring success. Robert noted that there are some major roof repairs needed.

C. Starr Family Home State Historic Site

Barbara Judkins reported that the Starr Family Home had a “moderately successful Victorian Village event” over the weekend. There were about 100 guests and the pop corn machine was kept busy. The kitchen stove should be hooked up this week or the next and will be fired. A new educator has been brought on staff and will start next week. (Megan Maxwell is moving to Memphis with her husband.) Tom Speir thanked Barbara for taking the lead on Texas Archaeology Month. Barbara gave a shout to Bill Whitis for coming out to help with the Victorian Village. He was the “grumpy guy in the East Wing” who kept telling the children not to touch things.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Tom Speir reported that the Michelson has a new exhibit which began November 6th and will run through January 5th. It is “New Mexico: The Art of the Printmaker.” The opening reception is this evening from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. The show explores printing on paper using different techniques such as linocut, wood block, etching and silkscreen. The images range from the vibrant colors of Joe Waldrun’s work to the beautiful prints of Gustave Baumann.

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB)

Tom Speir mentioned that while talking with Susan Spears, she reported that she had done a Powerpoint presentation with “then” and “now” photos of

various city homes. Ralph Newlan is still the current HLPB president and has been having health issues.

VI. Other

Logo. Tom Speir reported that our Commission now has a logo. It is patterned after the THC logo using an exclamation point with the shape of Harrison County as the dot (instead of the shape of Texas used by the THC). An attempt has been made to see if the use of the logo is agreeable with the THC where a public relations person called saying he could not give us permission to use it but saw no problem. The possible use will be brought to state commissioners to see if there is a problem. Bill Whitis mentioned that he was anxious to use the logo with the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission when we were sure that it was acceptable to do so. In fact, he has been waiting for official word so that he can use it on receipts to those folks who have contributed to the Friends during 2018.

Mid-19th Century Building Tools. Gerry Gibson is looking for information on building tools from the 1830s to 1860s. Barbara Judkins believes that she has some info and said that he can call her. Betsy Cadenhead indicated that she has some books on old tools that may be of help.

VII. Administrative

Incoming mail. Tom Speir reported that we have received a communication from the American Association of State and Local History and the latest issue of *The Medallion* from THC. There was discussion of the problem of securing copies of *The Medallion* for members of our Commission. Barbara Judkins volunteered to donate copies from the Starr Family Home Site. We have also received the bulletin of Texas Archaeological Society.

Membership Recommendations. Tom Speir reported that we started with 24 members two years ago. Two resigned, Joe Hudson and Elizabeth Bradshaw, two are being dropped, Alana Poole-Jones and Billy Nutt, and five new members are being added to the recommended list. If approved, our membership will go from 24 to 25.

Recommendation of New Officers for 2019 to 2021. Tom is proposing that the treasurer's position not be filled because the funds formerly cared for by the treasurer have been transferred to the Friends of the Harrison County Historical

Commission. He suggested that we may want to consider redoing the bylaws and dropping the treasurer. Because Tom will have to help his sister take care of his mother, he suggested that Bill Whitis be nominated as chair and that he be nominated as the vice-chair. On motion, Bill Whitis was nominated as chair, Tom Speir as vice-chair, and Richard Magrill as secretary. These recommendations will be made to the County Judge who officially appoints the member and officers.

Pop-Up Sign. Our pop-up sign is currently in the T.C. Lindsey General Store at Jonesville. We plan to put it in Marshall for the “Wonderland of Lights” in December and leave it there for January. It will be in a prominent place in the Wiseman Center. We need to get it to Hallsville for its sesquicentennial. There are also six school districts in the county and we would like to get it in each one for two months.

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

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be January 10th 2019 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill