

**HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 14<sup>th</sup> 2019**

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:** Bill T. Whitis, Richard Magrill, Rose Mary Magrill, Ann Brannon, Thomas Richardson, Clemmie Copeland, Gerald Gibson, Barbara Judkins, Betsy Cadenhead, Marty Vaughan, and Robert Wood.

**Visitor(s) Present:** Roy Jack McCarroll and Steve Horton.

**I. Call to Order**

Bill T. Whitis, chair, called the meeting to order on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 1:30 p.m. in the conference room of the T&P Depot Museum.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting of March 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 were approved as distributed.

**III. County Budget Report**

Bill Whitis reported that we have spent \$990 from the \$3,000 included in the county budget for the fiscal year running from October 2018 through September 2019 leaving a balance of \$2,010 remaining.

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

**A. Archaeology**

***Granger Hall Rosenwald School.*** Bill Whitis reported that Tom Speir is working on recording the Granger Hall Rosenwald School location as an archeological site.

***Young's Mill Pond Property.*** Bill Whitis also reported that the owners of the Young's Mill Pond property want to give it to the Friend of the Harrison County Historical Commission. It consists of approximately 170 acres and the pond is located on the back. Thomas Richardson arranged a meeting with the caretakers, who were not pleased that the (non-resident) owners desired to make a charitable donation of the property. (They, the caretakers, "peeled out of the parking lot" ending the meeting, but Thomas reports that they have calmed down now.) Bill posed the question, "Is it feasible for us to take on the property?" Robert Wood mentioned that he had asked the Lions Club if they would like to locate a camp there. He has not heard back on that inquiry. Matters are very "up in the air." The property owners live in Georgia, and they paid for the historical marker that is in process for the location of the pond.

***Truss Bridge on Old US80.*** Bill Whitis noted that he had received a phone call from County Commissioner Phillip Mauldin reporting that the truss bridge on Old US80 (visible from current US80 near Hallsville) had been stolen. Tom Speir contacted the state which reported that the bridge is the property of Harrison County. Upon investigation, Tom found the bridge still standing. Signs were then put on the bridge alerting folks that it is a recorded archaeological site. The landowner of the surrounding property became concerned about the signs since he regarded the bridge as "his" property. It was explained to him that he owns the land but that the county owns the bridge. (Robert Wood noted that it would require a really large piece of equipment to actually move the bridge in tact!)

## **B. Archives**

No report.

## **C. Cemeteries**

***Ewing Chapel Cemetery.*** Bill Whitis reported that Ewing Chapel Cemetery Day is Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup> and that all are invited. Rose Mary Magrill indicated that the meeting is held at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Marshall and that all are invited for the lunch. She asked that those who might attend let her know so that sufficient food may be prepared.

***Woodlawn Cemetery.*** Bill Whitis reported that Woodlawn Cemetery has been approved as a Texas Historic Cemetery. Their plan is to get a medallion. Then later, they may do the application for a historical marker.

***Pope Cemetery.*** Bill also reported on the Pope City Cemetery which now wants only to be called Pope Cemetery. As he indicated at our last meeting, the folks involved with the cemetery did not want to include the back section which consists of African American graves. Pope Cemetery has produced a typescript of an 1869 document showing that they sold the back part off. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has accepted the typescript and THC is moving forward with its application for designation as a Texas Historic Cemetery.

***Friendship Colored Cemetery.*** Bill indicated that the Pope Cemetery people report that the graves on the property behind it is called the Friendship Colored Cemetery. It was reportedly sold to Owen's Chapel Church. According to Robert Wood, the church building burned down about 15 years ago. Concern was expressed for the recognition of the Friendship Colored Cemetery. Barbara Judkins and Ann Brannon volunteered to work on an application for its recognition as a Texas Historic Cemetery under the "undertold story" category. (Access to this cemetery is by means of a path along the outside of the Pope Cemetery.)

***Dillard Family Cemetery.*** Bill Whitis reported that there is a new cemetery called the Dillard Family Cemetery. This cemetery has been started to provide a future burial place for Virginia Dillard, the oldest Bishop College alumnae, who attended the recent dedication of the historical marker for the college. The cemetery is located on Jackson Road and is at least a mile outside of Harleton so it meets the states's recent ban on new cemeteries within incorporated areas. Bill noted that the fence around the cemetery looks quite nice.

***"O'Connor" Cemetery.*** Bill also reported that investigations regarding a cemetery on Sue Bell Lake Road are problematic since it does not appear that there is permission from the property owner to check into it. (It is called "O'Connor" after a Methodist minister who is buried there.)

***Sherrod Cemetery.*** A recent phone call indicated that someone is looking for Sherrod Cemetery. The person inquiring thinks it is south of I-20, but Bill Whitis says that the burial names match a cemetery north of I-20.

#### **D. Education**

***History Fair.*** Sharon Dews was not present to report on the History Fair and Richard Magrill indicated that she had not responded to his request for a report.

## **E. Historical Markers**

***Wyalucing and W.P. Lane Markers*** . Bill Whitis reported that the missing Wyalucing (home of Lucy Pickens Holcomb) and W.P. Lane markers were found in the Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library. It is thought that the Wyalucing marker, particularly since the home no longer exists, should be placed in the Historical Museum when it finally secures a building for housing the Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library collection. Currently, both markers are in Bill's home and he is periodically working on cleaning them. (They are both solid brass and very tarnished.)

***James Farmer, Jr. Statue***. In reference to the work toward erecting a statue of James Farmer, Jr. on the western portion of the lawn of the 1901 Courthouse, Bill Whitis reported that Tom Speir had provided him a copy of proposed guidelines for the erection of statues on county property. The draft is based on Van Zandt County's policy. Robert Wood indicated that he would like to have a copy of the draft. Fund-raising plans for the statue of James Farmer, Jr., a noted Civil Rights activist and Marshall native, are on hold until a policy can be adopted by the County Commissioners Court.

***"Undertold Story" Markers***. Bill Whitis noted that "undertold story" markers can now be secured by applying on line. Applications are due by June 15<sup>th</sup>. The "Barrymore Incident" and Waskom as the "Gateway to Texas" are two possible submissions from Harrison County.

***Trammel's Trace Marker***. Gerry Gibson indicated that he had offered to help Gail Beil to liaison with Gary Pinkerton regarding the possible Trammel's Trace marker. He will call her.

***Temple Emanu-El Cemetery Marker***. Bill Whitis indicated that Tom Speir has talked with the sponsor of the Temple Emanu-el Cemetery marker. Tom continues to think that it should be officially dedicated. The Temple Emanu-El folks do not. In any case, the marker is already installed without any public celebration of which our Commission is aware.

***First State Bank of Hallsville Marker***. Bill Whitis reported that we have submitted all the information requested by THC regarding the First State Bank of Hallsville Marker. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, it should be approved and sent to the foundry. Bill thinks we should hold off the dedication ceremony until Hallsville's Western Days on October 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>. At that time, we should have a "built in crowd and more temperate weather" and he believes that it will be a time agreeable to all involved.

***Old Elks Club Building Marker.*** Bill noted that we still do not know where the Old Elks Club Building marker is.

***Fred Lewis Marker.*** Barbara Judkins reported that she continues to work with THC on the Fred Lewis marker destined to be installed at the Starr Family Home State Historic Site. When the text is approved it will go to the foundry for casting. She hopes the unveiling will be in the fall and plans to have a party. (A choir and a nice afternoon on a beautiful day are on order!)

***Marshall Ice Factory Marker.*** Barbara Judkins is interested in an application for a marker for the former Ice Factory. It was in the pink “Alamo”-style building on Fulton Street in Marshall. At one time, Marcus Israelson produced 10,000 pounds of ice a day in the building. Later, it was used to generate the first electricity to light up the Peter Whetstone Square. Barbara is already working on the application but it will not be ready until 2020. Also, we will need to talk to the City of Marshall since they own the building.

***Stage Coach Road Marker.*** The subject of security cameras for the Stage Coach Road Marker has been looked into by Gerry Gibson. He reported that there are several options of infrared cameras that could be used. (Robert Wood is also looking into possible anti-theft improvements.) Gerry commented, “If someone wants to steal it, they will steal it.” Cameras are, of course, relatively inexpensive and less so than replacing a marker. Bill Whitis suggested that we need to look into this matter carefully. We don’t want to have stolen cameras. It’s a lot to think about. Barbara Judkins suggested battery-powered wi-fi which range in price from under \$200 to however much you want to spend. Gerry indicated that he would give the money to the Friends if it is agreed to place cameras and the church finds it acceptable. Gerry and Robert can report on this subject next month and get Gail Beil to contact the Pine Bluff Baptist Church. Barbara said that we should leave the investigative work to Gerry and Robert but added the suggestion that we put a micro-chip on the marker so it can be traced. That’s a low cost option. She thinks micro-chips are less than \$20.

***Booker T. Washington School Marker.*** The Booker T. Washington School marker will be installed at the Elementary School in Elysian Fields and dedicated on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. Tom Speir will represent the Commission, doing introductions, etc., because it was he who worked so long with the local people in the process of securing the marker.

## **F. Historical Museum**

***Genealogy Workshop.*** The Genealogy Workshop went well. Gerry Gibson estimated an attendance of 15–20 people.

***Women of East Texas.*** A new event called the “Women of East Texas” is coming up. It will involve a report on the Rosenwald Schools by Gerald Gibson and remarks from former Rosenwald School teachers.

***Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library.*** There was no report on investigations toward finding a home for the materials of the Historical Museum’s Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library’

## **G. Information Technology**

Bill Whitis reported that he has completed our annual report to the THC on-line. On our Facebook page, we started the year with 261 who liked it and now have 969. Bill is doing one to three stories a week and Barbara Cox is also preparing some stories. Bill spent last night at the William Bates Anderson home and will be doing articles on that subject.

## **H. Oral History**

Bill Whitis reported that two different people have asked to be recorded and both have then backed out. He is working on the possibility of interviewing Virginia Dillard, the oldest living alumnae of Bishop College. She wants to give us an hour. (Her daughter is a bit nervous.) This interview will be her chance to speak in her own words.

## **I. Preservation**

No report.

## **J. Publications**

The THC is putting together a book to document people and places that marked the WWI centennial. No one is aware of anything that has taken place in Harrison County leaving nothing to report to THC.

## **K. Tourism**

No report.

## **L. Goals**

***World War II Veterans Memorial Sign for US80.*** Bill Whitis noted that last month, the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission voted to pay for the western county line sign marking US80 as the World War II Veterans Memorial Highway. At this meeting, he conveyed Tom Speir's objection to the use of "Friends" funds for this purpose and that instead he plans to secure a donor. However, the Friends reaffirmed their decision to purchase the sign to the western border of Harrison County.

## **M. Annual Preservation Awards**

Bill Whitis solicited nominations for our Annual Preservation Awards Nominations are due by Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> of April.

## **V. Special Reports**

### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

No report.

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

***Depot Activities.*** Robert Wood noted that events for the Depot Museum are planned every month between now and November, mostly geared toward tourism. The Depot Museum is hoping for a train show. The leak in the entrance tunnel is going to be fixed by the construction company. They will put an epoxy seal on the outside wall. After the leaking is fixed, the water-damaged elevator will be repaired.

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

***The Masque of Beauty and the Beast.*** Barbara Judkins announced that the Starr Family Home State Historic Site is hosting an outdoor play this evening and Friday evening called "The Masque of Beauty and the Beast." The play is directed by John Dement of East Texas Baptist University. The performance is free and for the convenience of those attending there will be a food truck serving Caribbean and American "fair" food.

***Firing Up the Kitchen Stove.*** Barbara reported that next Wednesday and the Wednesday after there will be cooking using the kitchen's wood stove. (Next

Wednesday will be a cake day!) She has been pleased with a big spike in Facebook activity related to the use of the stove for food preparation.

**Other.** She said that the staff is working on other “big” projects but cannot make an announcement at this time. The site is seeing an increase in visitations. Richard Magrill inquired about the cost of the handsome new exterior signs which include photographs. Barbara indicated that they cost \$8K each; the price is due to the fact that the signs are guaranteed to last and, in particular, to resist fading.

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

**Exhibits.** Susan Spears sent an email emphasizing that the Buffalo Soldier exhibit of the works of Bob Snead will be continuing through March 16<sup>th</sup> and that the Will Klemt exhibit will go on through April 16<sup>th</sup>.

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

**Central Marshall Historic District.** At our next meeting, the new Marshall City Manager Mark Rohr, will talk about the efforts toward creating a historic district in the downtown area.

#### **VI. Other**

No report.

#### **VII. Administrative**

**Miscellaneous.** The court house staff is having a “Walking for Health” event. Entry fee is a two-pound bag of beans or rice. The walk will be from the Peter Whetstone Square down West Houston to the old fairgrounds. (Barbara Judkins volunteered to give four pounds of food not to walk!) Marshall Main Street is having a “Touch a Truck” event where children can come up and touch fire trucks, ambulances, *etc.* Thomas Richardson noted that the First United Methodist Church of Hallsville will be celebrating its 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Bill Whitis asked if anyone has Jean Birmingham’s current address? Ann Brannon volunteered to get it from the Historical Museum.

**East Texas Historical Association.** The East Texas Historical Association has announced its fall meeting for October 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> 2019 at the Fredonia Hotel in Nacogdoches.

**Facebook Page.** Bill Whitis emphasized that, as always, we need photos and also ideas of subjects for our Facebook page.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2019 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

**Submitted by Richard Magrill**