

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

May 9th 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, Ann Brannon, Clemmie Copeland, Gerald Gibson, Barbara Judkins, Betsy Cadenhead, Marty Vaughan, Thomas Richardson, Robert Wood, and Gail Beil.

Visitor(s) Present: Susan Pool, John Fortune, Fred Badalamente, and Mary Rose Humphrey.

Medical Report: Thomas Richardson reported that Commission Member Carol Greer continues to improve each week. Her cognition is fine and her speech, although soft, is clear. Her right arm and leg are still hampered by limited movement. Nevertheless, the family is considering the possibility of her traveling by automobile to Lubbock for the graduation of a grandchild from Texas Technical University.

I. Call to Order

Bill T. Whitis, chair, called the meeting to order on May 9th 2019 at 1:38 p.m. in the conference room of the T&P Depot Museum.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of April 11th 2019 were approved as distributed and corrected.

III. County Budget Report

Bill Whitis reported that we have spent \$1,214 from the \$3,000 included in the county budget for the fiscal year running from October 2018 through September 2019 leaving a balance of \$1,786 remaining.

Bill noted that we will need to submit next year's proposed budget to the County Commissioners' Court by the end of May. He will submit the same budget as was proposed and adopted last year.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

No report.

B. Archives

No report.

C. Cemeteries

Storm Damage Assessment. Bill Whitis reported that after the storm last night he had checked out Greenwood and Hebrew cemeteries and there appeared to be no related damage. Marty Vaughan reported that the Scottsville and Concord cemeteries did have some damage.

Marshall Cemetery. Richard Magrill noted that the Marshall Cemetery looked nice and freshly mowed as he passed it on the way to this meeting. Bill Whitis said that the stones cleaned last year are looking especially good.

Sullivan Funeral Home Map of County Cemeteries. It was reported that the Sullivan Funeral Home may donate a map of county cemeteries to our archives.

Concord Cemetery Day. Marty Vaughan announced that the Concord Cemetery will be having its annual meeting on the Saturday before Memorial Day (May 25th).

D. Education

History Fair. Richard Magrill indicated that there has been no report received from Sharon Dews concerning the countywide History Fair this past January. Bill Whitis mentioned Tom Speir's counsel that we need to begin the promotion of next year's fair right away. Bill indicated that we would need to find

someone able and willing to do this promotion. (Note: As chair he should not be expected to fill this gap and in any case will not be able to take on such an added responsibility.)

Hallsville History. Thomas Richardson reported that he had given several talks on the history of Hallsville in recent days.

E. Historical Markers

First State Bank of Hallsville Marker. Thomas Richardson reported that he had talked with Faran Cain, chair of Hallsville's sesquicentennial committee, and he agreed that it would be good to dedicate the First State Bank of Hallsville marker during its October 24th - 27th schedule of events. There will be a Civil War re-enactment and various other events. Saturday morning may be a good time for the marker dedication. Thomas also noted that the vault for the bank weighs several tons and was brought into Hallsville by train. There is curiosity surrounding how it was actually installed inside the bank.

Hallsville Cemetery Marker. Thomas also noted that the Hallsville Cemetery marker is now completely destroyed and there is a need to raise the \$1875 needed to replace it.

Booker T. Washington School Marker. The Booker T. Washington School marker was dedicated at the Elementary School in Elysian Fields on Saturday, April 27th at 2 p.m. Bill Whitis reported that there were 40-50 people in attendance. Mrs. Beulah Jernigan, a 1949 graduate, was the guest speaker.

Old Elks Club Building Marker. Bill also reported that the marker for the Old Elks Club Building has been found. Tony Crosby reported that it was sitting outside on the breeze way of the apartments on North Bolivar. A date needs to be set for its dedication. Bill investigated the date of the building's original opening and found it to be November 26th in 1903 (which was Thursday, Thanksgiving Day, that year but a Tuesday this year). He believes some other date should probably be looked for on which to dedicate it. Gail Beil suggested that the marker be dedicated as a part of Marshall's "Wonderland of Lights" celebration. (She will talk with the new owners of the building about this possibility.)

Robert W. Loughery Marker. In checking on the status of old markers, Bill Whitis found that the marker for Robert W. Loughery, a Harrison County newspaper editor, is missing. It was bolted to the front of the *Marshall News Messenger (MNM)* building. Bill and *MNM* staff members looked through the mostly-unoccupied building, but it was not located inside.

Trammel's Trace Cabin. Bill Whitis reported that the Texas Historical Commission (THC) has on file two separate log cabins with markers in Harrison County. The Trammel's Trace Cabin is located on Henley Perry in Marshall where Hobart Key moved it in 1938. The THC also lists a "Key Log Cabin," but no location information is provided online and we do not have a separate file on it here. Both are said to be Registered Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs) with medallions and story plates. Bill suspects that they are one and the same and has inquired with the THC if they have any information on the Key Log Cabin.

World War II Veterans Memorial Highway Marker. Bill Whitis and Marty Vaughan met with representatives of the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) on Friday April 12th about the installation of the World War II Veterans Memorial Highway sign in Waskom. Highway signs cannot be within 325 feet of one another. There is a metal "Welcome to Texas" sign at the state line and a speed limit sign after that, so the new sign will have to go 650 feet from the state line, as opposed to locating it beside the old stone Texas marker as we had hoped. We are still waiting for Harrison County to enter into an inter-local agreement with TXDOT for the sign to go on our western border near Gregg County; once that agreement is in place, our Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission will pay to have the sign manufactured.

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. Gail Beil reported that she has met with the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church which was founded in 1869 and they want a marker. Gail will be interviewing a long-time member about the congregation's history in preparation for a marker application to be submitted.

Zephyr Wright. Gail Beil indicated that she has an application almost ready for a marker for Zephyr Wright who was from Harrison County and became the White House family cook when Lyndon Baines Johnson was in residence there (he credited her with inspiring the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act).

Palace Cleaners. Gail noted that the Palace Cleaners building which the Historical Museum is in the process of securing for its Inez Hatley Hughes Research Collection meets the eligibility requirements for an RTHL designation. She indicated that she will do an application as soon as the Historical Museum has title to it.

Leroy Fisher. Gail also stated that Leroy Fisher, an architect, might be added to her group of possible marker applications.

James Farmer, Jr. Statue. Richard Magrill inquired about progress toward erecting a statue of James Farmer, Jr. on the western portion of the lawn of the

1901 Courthouse. (James Farmer, Jr. was a noted Civil Rights activist and Marshall native.) Gail Beil noted that we have a new county judge and that she plans to sit down with him and make sure that we are good to go with the Harrison County Commissioner's Court. Bill Moyers and Bishop Robert E. Hays, Jr. Have agreed to chair the committee that will raise the funds and erect the statue. By middle of June there should be a plan in place. Already, she indicated, that there is about \$20K in City of Marshall funds available for the project. (The project itself will be handled through the Marshall Downtown Development Committee.) Plans are for the statue to be erected in the peninsula facing west on the opposite side of the 1901 Courthouse from the Confederate Soldier statue. The pedestal will be of the same height and granite as that of the Confederate Soldier but in a more modern style. "Marshall," Gail pointed out, "could be viewed as the cradle of the whole Civil Rights movement."

Woodlawn Cemetery Marker. Bill Whitis reported that the Woodlawn Cemetery Association has completed their application for a full-sized marker and it will be submitted September 1st.

Fred Lewis Marker. Barbara Judkins reported that the Fred Lewis Marker for the Starr Family Home State Historic Site is still in process.

Waskom "Gateway to Texas" Marker. The "undertold story" marker for Waskom as the "Gateway to Texas" is still being worked on by Tom Speir.

F. Harrison County Historical Museum/ Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library

Ann Brannon was pleased to report on the Historical Museum's choice of the Palace Cleaners building as the new home for the Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library. She expressed particular appreciation to Gail Beil for her efforts in securing this building. Closing on the property is expected by the end of May. Ann also noted that Janet Cook is retiring.

G. Information Technology

Facebook Page. Bill Whitis reported that our Facebook page now has 1,114 likes (we started the year with 261).

Apps for the Lale Trail and Stagecoach Trace. Bill has also done preliminary work on apps for our two tour routes, the Lale Trail and Stagecoach Trace. Apps would enable easier access to and revision of these recommended driving routes for discovering historical sites in Harrison County.

H. Oral History

Gail Beil will record an interview with a nonagenarian of the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church this weekend. She is a member whose recollections will help to flesh out the church's application for a historical marker. Bill Whitis is still reaching out to Alton Allen for an interview.

I. Preservation

Turner House. Gail Beil noted that the Marshall City Commission continues working on ways in which its ordinances can be revised to aid in the preservation of the Turner House and others like it. The hope is to devise an ordinance that will force owners to undertake needed upkeep and repairs or authorize the city to acquire such properties, fix them up, and sell them with the original owners having first rights of refusal.

J. Publications

Gail Beil reported that work is ongoing toward the reprinting of *Historic Harrison County*. Bill Whitis has started work on revising the Lale Trail brochure. (Some of the structures mentioned in it no longer exist, e.g. the Pelz house was torn down and is a vacant lot.) The Stage Coach Trace brochure's revision is more difficult because of missing and/or misplaced markers and it will have to await funding of the new markers. We do, however, need to go ahead and redo the Lale Trail brochure, especially in light of the fact that we include \$900 for publications as a line in our budget each year. Bill also passed around an example of the Stagecoach Trace brochure reproduced in black on white paper as a much less costly and more readable format for future reprintings. Richard Magrill expressed the hope of renaming the "Stagecoach Trace" brochure to some other designation since it is neither a "trace" nor is it made up of "stagecoach" routes.

K. Tourism

Boogie Woogie Fest. Gail Beil reported that there will be a truncated Boogie Woogie Fest on the third weekend in May (17th - 19th) which will at least hold the weekend for an annual celebration. The focus will be on raising funds for the upkeep of the T&P Depot. There will be twelve croquet teams playing on Saturday the 18th (\$30 is the cost of entering the tournament and it will begin at 9:00 a.m.). Barbara Judkins volunteered to supply the Starr Family Home State

Historic Site's croquet equipment for use by the T&P Depot board as it prepares for the tournament.

L. Goals

Young's Mill Pond. Bill Whitis reported that he had "stumbled through" a presentation to the Historical Museum board on the Young's Mill Pond property which the owners wish to donate to a non-profit entity in order that it might be preserved. The Museum Board agreed to form an exploratory commission for the purpose of determining the feasibility of its involvement but Ann Brannon indicated that the commission has not yet been formed.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

There was brief discussion of our joint awards presentation that will be held in the court room of the 1901 Courthouse on May 19th at 2 p.m. The Historic Landmarks Preservation Board will be presenting eight awards on that occasion. In light of the collapse of a county table last year which destroyed Gail Beil's punch bowl, no glassware is to be used in serving this year's refreshments. These will be made available in the jury room on the same floor as the main entrance to the court room. *Note:* This event may be included as a part of the schedule of the Boogie Woogie Fest.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

Robert Wood reported that water in the passenger tunnel continues to be the big issue. AMTRAK is interested in solving the problem. Gail Beil noted that the hope is to make money for the Depot on the Boogie Woogie Fest events. Robert noted that there is a "chance" we might get our ticket agent back; at least there is now no knee jerk refusal whenever we ask about getting an agent back.

C. Starr Family Home State Historic Site

Barbara Judkins reported that the Starr Family Home State Historic Site is doing well and is pulling in some revenue. The site is getting a lot of out of town

visitors. Staff are working on “food ways” programs using the kitchen where families pay for its use. Summer heat is not a good time for firing up the wood-burning stove so it will be a time for food preparation that is cooler. They are looking at the idea of a “quick pickling” event. The recent “free sites day” (when admission to all state historic sites was free) generated about twenty in attendance.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Exhibits. The “Birds in Art” exhibit will continue through July 3rd.

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB)

No report.

F. Others (Sabine Farms, T.C. Lindsey Store, Main Street, Pemberton Heritage Center, colleges/schools, etc.)

T.C. Lindsay Store. Marty Vaughan reported that it was good to have Bob Phillips and the Texas Country Reporter crew back for a follow-up to their report of 20 years ago. She noted that the store now stocks sour cream and onion flavored crickets. (It’s a commercially prepared brand!)

Central Marshall Historic District. We are still waiting on Marshall’s new City Manager Mark Rohr to come and talk with us about plans for the Central Marshall Historic District. We hope that his visit can be scheduled in June. (*Note:* Mark replied after our meeting and noted that he was very busy, but might find time to address the Commission later in the year.)

Marshall Visual Arts Center. Fred Badalamente of Creative Concepts Unlimited spoke briefly on plans to buy the Marshall Visual Arts Center and operate it as a non-profit. The structure will be kept in its present form. He is fully interested in being the benefactor in this purchase.

VI. Other

New Address for Jean Birmingham. Jean Birmingham has moved to a new address in Houston: 3433 North Parkwood Drive, Houston, TX 77021.

VII. Administrative

Mail. Bill Whitis reported that we have received the most recent issues of *Preservation Magazine* (National Trust for Historic Preservation) and *History News* (American Association for State and Local History). He also noted that we

have renewed our membership in the former and will shortly renew our membership in the latter.

Civil War Maps. Bill shared copies he had made of two Civil War area maps of Marshall. One map details the center of the county with the town surrounded by trees and the elevations of various locations which could be used in gun placements and the other gives the central downtown street layout.

East Texas Historical Association. The East Texas Historical Association has announced its fall meeting for October 10th - 12th 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 June 13th 2019 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill