

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
July 11th 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, Marty Vaughan, Gerald Gibson, and Betsy Cadenhead.

Visitor(s) Present: Steve Horton, Barbara Cox.

Medical Report: (See IV.F. for a report on Gail Beil).

I. Call to Order

Bill T. Whitis, chair, called the meeting to order on July 11th 2019 at 1:31 p.m. in the conference room of the T&P Depot Museum.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of June 13th 2019 were approved as distributed (and corrected).

III. County Budget Report

Bill Whitis reported that we have spent \$1,712 from the \$3,000 included in the county budget for the fiscal year running from October 2018 through September 2019 leaving a balance of \$1,288 remaining.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Bill Whitis reported that there is a new cell phone tower proposed for Hallsville. He checked and the location should not affect any possible archeological sites and told them to proceed.

B. Archives

Bill Whitis reported that Commission member Audrey Kariel wants us to dig through our archives and find some interviews that she did some years ago. She asked especially about two on a rather long list. The two she was especially interested in have been found.

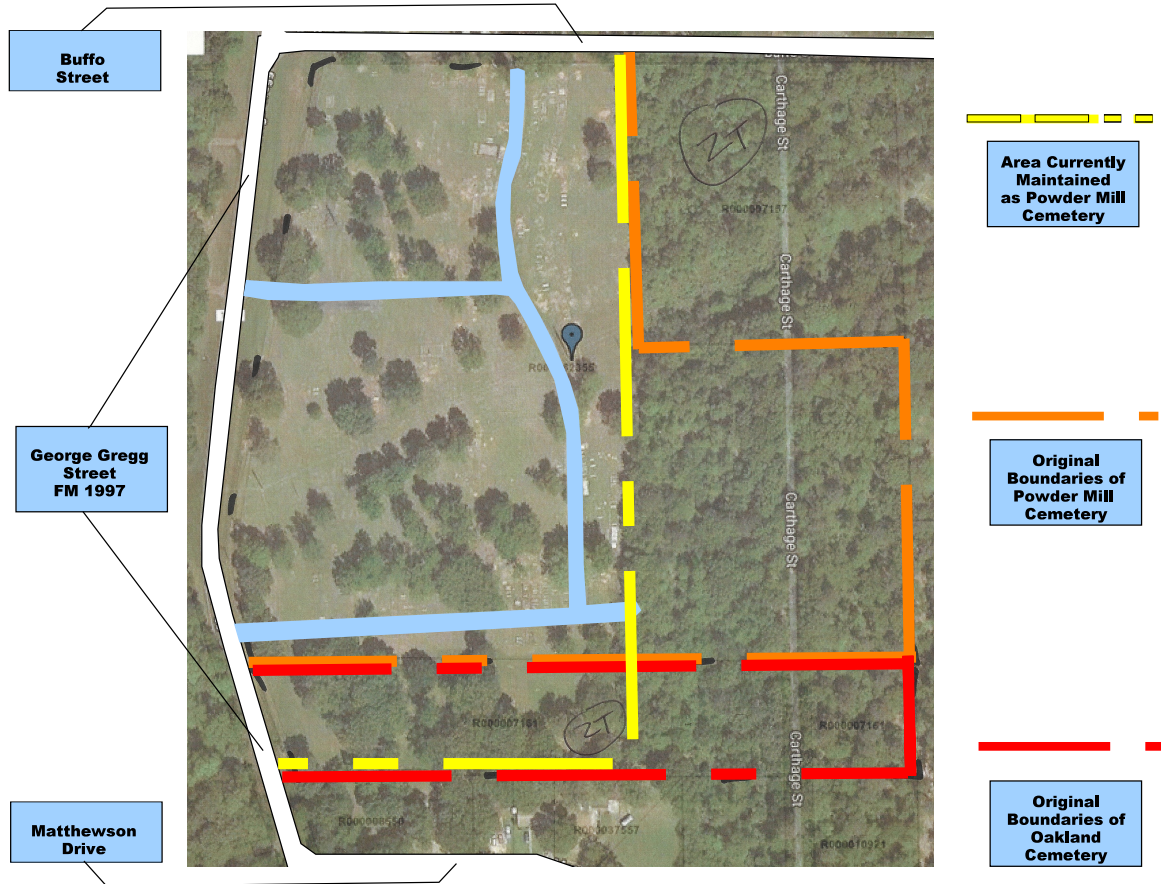
C. Cemeteries

Marshall Fire Fighters Honored with Markers. Bill Whitis reported that the Retired Marshall Fire Fighters Association has placed stone markers on three graves: Fire Chief Glen B. Warnstaff who served from April 16, 1919 to December 31, 1969; Fire Chief Carl L. Bechtold who served from October 17, 1917 to December 28, 1967; and Captain Bill Johnson who served from August 8, 1927 to June 9, 1949 and who died while on duty at Northside Station after returning from a grass fire call. Warnstaff and Bechtold are buried in Algoma Cemetery and Johnson in Fairview Cemetery.

Mimosa Hall Cemetery. Roy Jack McCarroll who lives on the old Mimosa Hall land took Bill near the cemetery (assisted by Mardi Gras, the dog). Access can be difficult. Rains makes it too muddy to get to. Bill now has a map and notes that will help. There are two historical markers with the same wording, one in the cemetery and one on the main road.

Powder Mill Cemetery/Oakland Cemetery. Bill Whitis shared a copy of an advertisement for Oakland Cemetery furnished by Ann Brannon and a map on which he noted the original boundaries of both Powder Mill and Oakland Cemeteries. The front area of the combined cemeteries is maintained as Powder Mill Cemetery. However, there is a large area at the back that is not being maintained which contained graves and markers. Jeremy McReynolds, a local goat farmer, fell into some of them one day. The names of the persons on the stones are all recorded as having been buried at Powder Mill. Bill noted that H.B. Pemberton, his wife and son are all buried in the southernmost part that is being maintained.

That is noteworthy because Oakland Cemetery was white and Powder Mill is black. Of course, there was always confusion over the property line. Sometimes members of the same family are separated between the Oakland part and the Powder Mill part.



Map of Powder Mill Cemetery and Oakland Cemeteries showing original and currently maintained boundaries courtesy of Bill T. Whitis and Oakland Cemetery advertisement dated June 22, 1902 located by Ann Brannon.

Marshall City Cemetery. The Marshall City Cemetery got hit with a bad storm and a cedar tree was toppled and it broke the stones on some early graves.

D. Education

Bill Whitis reported that he spoke to the W.W. Hartsell Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and informed them of the duties and responsibilities of the Historical Commission. In regard to their specific concern, he indicated that we have no position on the Confederate Soldier statue on the Peter Whetstone Square. The W.W. Hartsell Camp has offered to help with cemetery cleanups or Civil War research. Bill Elliot is our contact. During his 20 minute presentation, Bill mentioned, (**Need Name!**), the 105-year-old black Confederate Veteran whose grave in Harrison County has recently come to our attention. He is buried among his Freedmen relatives whose graves are marked with their Freedmen's names. However, the Veterans Affairs marker for his grave uses his slave name rather than his Freedman's name because that is how he was recorded in their records.

E. Historical Markers

Gail Beil. Bill Whitis reported that Gail Beil is doing okay but sometimes her weakness gives her problems. In particular, she is unable to remember the password for her computer and therefore it is inaccessible. Bill has offered to take her computer to a store to see if they can access its files.

Walter Payne Lane Marker. The Walter Payne Lane marker in the Inez Hatley Hughes Research Center of the Harrison County Historical Museum does not have a location mentioned in its entry on the Texas Historical Commission (THC) website. A newspaper article mentioned that it was inside the 1901 courthouse. County Judge Chad Simms and his assistant are going to get with Richard and Christine Anderson and see about reinstalling it there.

Wyalucing Marker. The Wyalucing marker is still at Bill's home.

Southwell Company (THC's Marker Foundry) Closes. The THC has reported that as of May 1st there was no Texas foundry available to cast the state's historical markers. When Bill checked before our meeting, as of July 3rd there is still no one available. The Southwell Company which formerly made the markers (for the past fifty years!) was acquired by another and has been closed down. The acquiring foundry has indicated that it does not wish to establish a relationship with the THC to produce markers. Mark Wolfe, THC's executive director writes that "staff is working to find a solution in an expedient manner" but "must follow state guidelines and processes in selecting a new vendor."

Review of Marker Applications Suspended. The THC has indicated that it will not review any marker applications that have been submitted until there is a

foundry engaged to produce the markers. However, Bill asked Rose Mary Magrill if she would help out with marker applications since he is concerned that our applications continue to be sent in and secure their place in line for whenever the THC is able to resume processing them.

Currently Approved Markers in Limbo. Unfortunately, our approved markers for First State Bank of Hallsville and Young's Mill Pond were not manufactured before the previous foundry closed.

Old Elks Lodge Building Marker. The marker for the old Elks Lodge Building in Marshall is available for its scheduled installation during the "Wonderland of Lights" in December.

US80 World War II Veterans Highway Signs. The Harrison County Commissioners' Court and the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) have signed the needed interlocal agreement and the sign on the western edge of the county which has been paid for by the Friends of the Historical Commission can now go up. The City of Waskom has mailed its check to pay for the marker to be erected on the eastern edge of the county. We are looking at the possibility of having a grand unveiling on Veterans Day, Monday, November 11th. The signs will be four feet by ten feet and brown with white lettering. Apparently, our efforts have inspired Gregg County's Historical Commission and they want to install the appropriate signs on their eastern and western borders.

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

Becky Palmer New Director. Ann reported that Becky Palmer is now officially the new director of the Historical Museum. Janet Cook continues to help and is working in connection with the move to the Palace Cleaners Building which was purchased to house the Inez Hatley Hughes Research Library and museum artifacts. Packing for the move is going well. The research library will be closed until approximately October. It is hoped that Marshall's Memorial City Hall will be opened in October, giving public access to the Museum's military exhibits which have been installed there. A flyer has been sent out advertising the seven shows planned for the 2019-2020 entertainment season.

G. Information Technology

Facebook Page. Bill Whitis reported that our Facebook page now has 1,200 likes (we started the year with 261). He expressed appreciation for the help of

Barbara Cox and Steve Horton in developing posts for our page. “Please suggest stories,” he urged.

H. Oral History

Bill Whitis noted that our recorder is still in the possession of Gail Beil who borrowed it to do an interview with a nonagenarian of the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. He can get in her house whenever we need to retrieve it.

I. Preservation/Rosenwald Schools

Gerald Gibson reported that he is still looking for the second Woodlawn Rosenwald School. Today Bill Whitis got a call about the Granger Rosenwald School. Gerald recently retrieved a handwritten history of the Granger School which was accompanied by photographs.

J. Publications

Lale Trail. Bill Whitis reported that he is still fiddling with the Lale Trail text. We need additional buildings to add to the trail.

K. Tourism

No report.

L. Goals

No report.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

Bill Whitis reported that our Commission was one of the eighty who received a 2019 Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Historical Commission. He showed the certificate which we received.

V. Partners in Preservation Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

No report.

C. Starr Family Home State Historic Site

Fred Lewis Marker. Barbara Judkins emailed the Commission that the State Historic Site has opted to stay with THC while they hunt down a new foundry to produce markers in order to secure the Fred Lewis marker to be placed there.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Exhibits. Bonnie Strauss emailed that the Michelson will host the Hoover Watercolor Society Traveling Exhibit from July 9th through August 30th .

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 they still haven't heard when the Talking of Texas program on the store might run. It will air during in their next season.

VI. Other

Marshall Visual Arts Center/ City Laundry Building.

No report.

VII. Administrative

No report.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be on August 8th 2019 at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill