

Personal Historic Preservation

People often think of Historic Preservation in terms of rescuing old structures from the wrecking ball or the ravages of time. That may be the most common understanding of the phrase, but there is another application for Historic Preservation. This one deals with intellectual and personal property rather than real property.

Many people in our community may have accumulated a wealth of knowledge in terms of their experiences, papers and journals (their own or those of others), collections of books or artifacts, anecdotes, photographs, etc. Too often, as these individuals grow older, they are at risk of losing the treasures which they have gathered. Sometimes individuals pass away without making any provision for leaving their valuable papers or insights; these often are then lost to the community. In some cases this is because the materials were left to no one specifically or perhaps left to someone who does not recognize their worth. In such cases, the collections might be split up or relegated to the attic or, worse, consigned to the dumpster.

Do you have collections of papers, books, artifacts, or memories? Have you considered how you might preserve these treasures? Would you be willing to make a donation or a loan of these items? Would a specific bequest to some institution be appropriate? Here are a few suggestions:

- Perhaps you have a collection of old books on a given topic or documents, photographs, or maps defining the growth a business or industry. Such material, if appropriate, could be offered to a local library or repository such as
 - o **Tyrrell Historical Library**
Contact: William Grace, Branch Manager (409) 833-2759 or wgrace@ci.beaumont.tx.us
 - o **Special Collections at the Mary and John Gray Library at Lamar University**
Contact: Penny Clark, University Archivist (409) 454-5272 or Penny.Clark@Lamar.edu
 - o **Jefferson County Historical Commission Library**
Contact: Linda McMahan, Coordinator (409) 498-0533 or histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us
 - o **Museum of the Gulf Coast**
Contact: Sarah Bellian, Curator (409) 984-6446 or Bellianse@LamarPA.edu
 - o **The Texas Energy Museum**
Contact: Ryan Smith, Executive Director, (409) 833-5100 or Ryan@texasenergymuseum.org
- You could arrange to produce an oral history of your recollections of your time in the military service, your experiences as a teacher, your memories growing up in your home town, etc. To produce an oral history, contact either William Grace or Sarah Bellian at their above phone numbers or email addresses. You might discover this is a rewarding and enjoyable experience.
- You should clearly specify in your will how you would wish to provide for your collections