

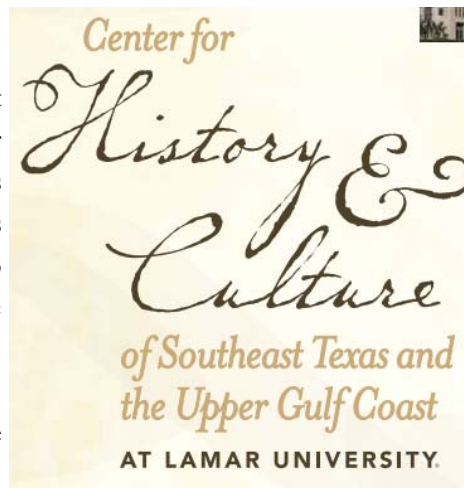
## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

The Center for History & Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast at Lamar University is bringing some fascinating speakers to our area to share research and discoveries about our rich Texas history. Congratulations to Lamar University and Dr. Mary Scheer, the Center's Director, for a successful launch.

Thank you to all of our members for your time and service in preserving our history.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair



Flyer Announcing Opening of Center for History & Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast  
Photo Credit: [Lamar University website](http://www.lamar.edu)

### VOLUME 2017, ISSUE 2

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### MARCH, 2017

#### Special points of interest:

- \* Jefferson County Fast Facts
- \* Handbook of Texas Women Project

## JEFFERSON COUNTY FAST FACTS

**4/10/1978**

Date County Judge Richard LeBlanc appointed Loretta Walker to her deceased husband's seat as Commissioner of Pct. 4. She was our first female commissioner and served until 12/31/78.

**4/13/2001**

Date County Judge Carl Griffith appointed Connie Patterson as Commissioner, Pct. 4, to succeed retiring Ed Moore. She was our first African-American female commissioner.

**1986**

Year Lolita Ramos was elected as the first female County Clerk in Jefferson County. She later was elected as the first female District Clerk.

## TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION NEWS



### *The La Salle Odyssey*

*Our Story Told by Seven Texas Museums*

*In early February of 1686 a small French ship, the Belle, went down in the murky waters of Matagorda Bay on the Texas Gulf Coast. With the ship were a famous explorer's dreams and a king's ambition to expand his empire in the New World.*

*The La Salle Odyssey, a series of exhibits in seven museums, tells the story of this ill-fated expedition and the remarkable discovery and excavation of the Belle and Fort St. Louis 300 years later.*

Explore a thematic guide from [THC's Texas Time Travel website](#) sharing the La Salle expedition odyssey as told by seven Texas museums.

Visit all seven museums in the guide to learn the full fascinating story of La Salle's ill-fated expedition and its impact on our history.

The La Salle Odyssey guide

Photo Credit: [Texas Time Travel Website](#)

## JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2017

|                    |      |  |
|--------------------|------|--|
| March 15, 2017     | Noon | Jury Impanelling Room<br>1085 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX             |
| May 17, 2017       | Noon | JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor<br>1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX |
| July 19, 2017      | Noon | JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor<br>1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX |
| September 20, 2017 | Noon | JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor<br>1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX |
| November 15, 2017  | Noon | JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor<br>1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX |

## VOLUNTEER HOURS AND MEMBERSHIP

Any work in the preservation or promotion of Jefferson County History may be counted toward your volunteer hours. JCHC meetings and travel time to and from meetings also count as volunteer hours. Members are reminded that at least 50 hours of volunteer work per year is required of each member.

Also with the number of hours, JCHC needs a general description of work performed, for example: 3 Hours – Marker Survey.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 409-835-8701 or contact Linda via email at [hstcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us](mailto:hstcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us)

## PRESERVATION PARTNERS

Beaumont Heritage Society  
Beaumont Landmark Commission  
Port Arthur Landmark Commission  
Texas Historical Foundation  
Beaumont Main Street  
Museum of the Gulf Coast

## HERITAGE HAPPY HOUR

### SPINDLETOP-GLADYS CITY BOOMTOWN MUSEUM

On February 16th the Beaumont Heritage Society held their bimonthly Heritage Happy Hour at the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum with craft beer selections provided by Giglio Distributing Company.

Members and the public enjoyed touring the museum which began as a Bicentennial project of the Lucas Gusher Monument Commission to commemorate the discovery of oil at the Spindletop Hill salt dome in Beaumont.

The event included setting off the Spindletop replica “gusher”, a sight which always delights visitors.



Spindletop-Gladys City Replica Oil Rig  
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie



Replica Spindletop Gusher  
Blows  
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie

## LA SALLE'S SHIP: *LA BELLE* LECTURE BY DR. JAMES E. BRUSETH

On March 7, 2017, the Center for History & Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast at Lamar University welcomed Dr. James E. Bruseth to the Mary & John Gray Library to give a presentation on his many years of experience working on the excavation and preservation of the lost ship *La Belle*, the last of French explorer La Salle's four ships which was wrecked in Matagorda Bay in 1686.

King Louis XIV sent explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, to North America in 1684 with four ships and 400 people in an expedition to establish a colony and trade routes, and also to locate Spanish silver mines. The expedition was doomed to failure, and La Salle lost his ships to pirates and storms, and ultimately his life when he was murdered by his own men. The *La Belle* ran aground in Matagorda Bay while awaiting La Salle's return from an overland expedition to locate the Mississippi River.

In June 1995, the Texas Historical Commission, then headed by Dr. Bruseth, located the wreck of the *La Belle* by organizing a magnetometer survey of the high-probability areas where research indicated the ship might be found. The excavation conducted from July 1996, under the direction of Dr. Bruseth, was conducted by means of a large double steel-walled cofferdam which allowed the water to be pumped out and the excavation to be conducted as if on dry land.

The recovered artifacts consisting of items such as ship timbers, brass cannons, muskets, ceramic fire pots, ax heads, glass beads and brass finger rings, were all conserved at Texas A&M University's Nautical Archeology Program. The Bob Bullock Museum in Austin is now host to the exhibit, *La Belle: The Ship that Changed History*.



Dr. Bruseth delivers his presentation at Lamar University's Mary & John Gray Library

Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness



Images of the cofferdam built for the excavation of the ship *La Belle* in Matagorda Bay, Texas, and the first of 3 bronze 4-pounder cannons discovered in the hold of the ship.

Photo Credit: Franklin M. Jones (US Department of State)

- <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ci/pix/b/oes/19238.htm>



## SAM HOUSTON REGIONAL LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTER

The Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center, part of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, is on a campaign to broaden its collections in order to more fully document the history of the Southeast Texas region. The Center serves as the official regional historical resource depository for the historic Atascosito District, a ten county area including Chambers, Harden, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk, San Jacinto and Tyler.

The Center preserves and provides access to historically significant records and artifacts from throughout the region. The Center's staff is seeking records and artifacts that document the following areas: African-American history; Hispanic history; materials related to the creation of the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation; Native American participation in the Civil War; Dutch and Japanese immigration, particularly for rice farming and related activities in Orange and Jefferson counties; pre-1900 rice production; German prisoner of war camps during World War II; and Women's suffrage.

The public is invited to visit the Center for an open house on Saturday, March 18, 10 AM – 2 PM. Visitors will have the opportunity to take a behind-the-scenes tour of the archival holdings of the Center to view items that may be in the exhibit up close and personal and to learn more about donating historical items.

## PRESERVATION TEXAS NEWS

### 2017 Texas Legislative Session Advocacy Priorities

At its board meeting on August 12, 2016 in Marshall, the Board of Directors of Preservation Texas adopted the following advocacy priorities for the 2017 Texas Legislative Session. Additional priorities may be adopted by the Board of Directors in the months ahead as legislation is filed and other issues of statewide importance are raised.

**Fund the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program**, including a \$20M base budget request and a \$21.2M exceptional item for deferred maintenance.

**Protect state historic preservation tax credits**, opposing legislation that would uncouple the state credit from federal standards putting historic interiors at risk and supporting the implementation of SB1316 that made historic preservation a priority in awarding housing tax credits.

**Protect state landmarks**, ensuring that future planning for the Austin State Hospital and Alamo Plaza do not result in the demolition of historic structures listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

**Fund preservation needs at state historic sites**, including an exceptional item request of \$1.5M for Texas Historical Commission sites.

**Fund state heritage tourism programs**, including an exceptional item request of \$4.6M for the Texas Historical Commission. Credit: [Preservation Texas website](#)

## WWII MEMORIAL OBSERVANCES FOR SAILORS



WWII Memorial at Seaman's Center in Port Arthur  
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie

The Port Arthur International Seafarers' Center and the Apostleship of the Sea – Diocese of Beaumont have held memorial observances for vessels and crews lost to German U-Boats en route or sailing from Southeast during the months of January and February 1942.

Father Sinclair Oubre, Executive Director / Port Chaplain, has done an excellent job of shar-

ing the history of each boat and crew, including newspaper and book articles. After each name was read of those lost at sea, a bell was rung. After the

Rite of Committal was given, a toast was made in honor of those brave men.

During the February observance, in attendance were three Greek seaman brought over from Houston waiting to make connection with their ship en route to Port Arthur. Two of the seamen were familiar with ships being lost during World War II and shared stories of Greek shipping.

Father Oubre is planning to continue to hold monthly memorial observances to honor those lost at sea and their families. As soon as we get the date and time for the March memorial, an informational email will be mailed to each JCHC member.

Father Sinclair Oubre speaks at WWII Memorial at Seaman's Center in Port Arthur  
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie



# TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING 2017

BY PAUL PROSPERIE



Texas State Historical Association Conference Display  
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie

The Texas State Historical Association Annual Meeting 2017 was held last weekend. I attended the conference, along with fellow member Bruce A. Hamilton, representing the JCHC. There were a couple of really excellent sessions that drew my interest. One in particular was called Using Oral History to Document Rural Dispersed Communities, sponsored by the Texas Oral History Association. This subject has been a very popular topic at the JCHC lately, and it was interesting to hear how others are documenting and preserving their own area's histories, as well.

The last session on Saturday, History in Action: The College Classroom in 2017, featured Northeast Texas Community College student Hector Zuniga's paper on the life of William P. Hobby, the former governor and owner of Beaumont Enterprise and the Beaumont Journal. Mr. Zuniga gave a superb presentation, reflecting on Hobby's early years in Woodville to his beginnings at the Houston Post. For me, this talk alone was worth the trip.

Looking back on the conference, I would say that there weren't many sessions pertaining to our area, but there were a few takeaways that will aid me in my research. I might also add that Mr. Hamilton, by far, was the biggest winner of the trip. He found an original roster of the Albert Sidney Johnson Camp #75 United Confederate Veterans dated 1895. It was signed by Tom J. Russell, commander, and George Washington O'Brien, adjutant. The document lists 131 names of Confederate veterans and the units they served. Way to go, Bruce!

Texas State Historical Association Conference  
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie



## FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION NEWS

The Texas Historical Commission is still accepting applications for the 2017 Diversity Internship Program!

We hope that you will inform any students, and/or student organizations you may be affiliated with, about the paid internship opportunity at the Texas Historical Commission (THC) for the summer of 2017. March 17, 2017 is the deadline for applications and supporting documents. Please scroll below for links to see more information and how to apply.

The THC created the Diversity Internship in Historic Preservation to build interest in, and awareness of, careers in historic preservation, specifically among students from underrepresented cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. This initiative strives to encourage students' interests in the fields of history, preservation, architecture, archeology, downtown revitalization, and heritage tourism.

Credit : [Friends of the Texas Historical Commission website](#)

## HERITAGE HAPPY HOUR AT MAGNOLIA CEMETERY BY PAUL PROSPERIE



Catherina Stengele's memorial

The Beaumont Heritage Society will be holding its bi-monthly Heritage Happy Hour at Magnolia Cemetery on April 20th, beginning at 5:30. This event is free for Beaumont Heritage Society members and \$10 for non-members, ages 21 and up. Those who attend will hear about early Beaumont history through the life experiences of our past residents. A few of our JCHC members will be participating in this event, so I hope to see a good turnout.

This will be a shorter version of the cemetery tour that we hold in October. Instead of the walking tour, we will have six stationed docents around different areas of the cemetery. Also, new this year will be a couple of six-passenger golf carts, provided by Magnolia Cemetery, to transport attendees to the different stations. Hope to see you there!

Photo Credits: [Find a Grave website](#)



## AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS



January 21 - April 28, 2017

ELECTRICITY created by the Benjamin Franklin Institute is a series of 16 hands on experiments that will

be sure to delight and amaze children and adults alike.

Credit: [Museum of the Gulf Coast website](http://Museum of the Gulf Coast website)



Museum of the Gulf Coast  
Photo Credit: [museumofthegulfcoast.org](http://museumofthegulfcoast.org)



*Chambers House Museum*  
**LAWN PARTY**  
March 25, 2017 11:30AM-1:30PM  
Music~Refreshments~Games

Lawn Party—March 25 @ 11:30 am—1:30 pm

Join us at the vintage inspired Chambers House Museum Lawn Party, sponsored by the Chambers Foundation, to celebrate the museum's 10th year anniversary! Bring the family or a group of friends to our beautiful grounds for old-fashioned games including croquet, badminton, and lawn bowling! Enjoy period music and refreshments as you stroll the west lawn, then pop into the house to tour the ground floor. Casual 1920s—40s attire encouraged (think whites and linens!), but not required. FREE!

Credit: [Chambers House Museum website](http://Chambers House Museum website)

Chambers House Museum

Photo Credit: [Chambers House Museum website](http://Chambers House Museum website)

### Nederland Heritage Society

March 14 - 19, 2017, Nederland Heritage Festival

1523 Boston Ave., Nederland, TX

The Nederland Historical Society is having a Fund Raiser at the Heritage Festival. They will have life size Dutch people cutouts on display for families to have pictures taken. All donations are appreciated.

Recently "The Texas Bucket List" featured Nederland's Glen Koele-may on their TV program. Also a newspaper reporter from Holland is coming to Nederland to do an article about Dutch pioneers and Heritage and life in Nederland. Call Carol at 409-749-4320 if you know anyone who wants to be interviewed about Nederland's Dutch history.



Dutch Windmill Museum  
Photo Credit: [Dutch Windmill Museum website](http://Dutch Windmill Museum website)

**JEFFERSON  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

1149 Pearl Street  
Third Floor  
Beaumont, TX 77701

Tel: 409-835-8701

E-mail:

histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us  
Linda McMahan, Coordinator



*To preserve and  
promote history within  
the County.*

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We're on the web!  
[http://co.jefferson.tx.us/  
Historical\\_Commission/](http://co.jefferson.tx.us/Historical_Commission/)

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Lighting Sconce on  
exterior of Tyrrell Park  
Community Center

Photo Credit: Theresa  
Goodness



Jefferson County Historical Commission

Executive Board 2016 - 2017

Chairman, Theresa Goodness

1st Vice-Chairman, Les McMahan

2nd Vice-Chairman, Paul Prosperie

Secretary/Treasurer, Linda McMahan

Brenda Jackson

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



### **TSHA Announces the Handbook of Texas Women Project**

The Handbook of Texas Women Project will  
expand on the *Handbook of Texas* by

promoting a more inclusive and comprehensive history of Texas. Texas  
women make Texas history. TSHA strives to significantly recognize the  
various ways women have shaped the state's history at home, across  
the state, nationally, and abroad.

TSHA's *Handbook of Texas Women Project* is a statewide educational and  
content development campaign focused on Texas women's history.  
During the project TSHA will update existing *Handbook of Texas* entries  
about Texas women and will add more than 3,000 new entries. The  
resulting *Handbook of Texas Women* will expand and greatly enrich the  
*Handbook of Texas*.

Credit: [Texas State Historical Association website](http://www.tsha.org/handbook-of-texas-women)