

JCHC JOURNAL

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION VOLUME 2020, ISSUE 2

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

We are all living with the impacts of COVID-19, a pandemic unlike any experienced in living memory. Thanks to modern technology many of us are able to continue working and providing essential services to the community. Although social distancing requirements have mandated the closure of public spaces such as museums and schools, the resources to educate ourselves and our children on our history are available online. May each of you stay safe during this stressful time.

Thank you to our members for your time and service.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair



Nurses from Jefferson County Employee Health Department screen the public for COVID-19 fever symptoms at the Jefferson County Courthouse on April 1, 2020

Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

VOLUME 2020, ISSUE 2

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APRIL 2020

Special points of interest:

- * Jefferson County Fast Facts
- * Courthouse Mini-Museum Exhibit
- * Area Museum Online Resources

JEFFERSON COUNTY FAST FACTS

\$500.00

Amount of award set by Commissioner's Court on 3/29/1919, for information leading to arrest and conviction of murderer of Mrs. E. Desivigny found murdered on her farm near Beaumont.

5/14/1919

Date of hearing by Commissioner's Court to consider petition to establish Drainage District No. 6.

\$14.50

Amount of winning bid on 7/14/1919, by Broussard, Taylor, & Davant, undertakers, to bury county paupers. Small pox victims cost an additional \$10.00 to bury. The losing bid by Pipkin & Brulin Co. was for \$35.00 per pauper burial.

MCFADDIN WARD HOUSE MUSEUM COLLECTION ODDITY

One of the stranger items in the collection of the McFaddin Ward House Museum's collection is a dead rat in a 1920's trap . This item is only one of 35,000 different objects that became part of Mamie McFaddin Ward's estate upon her death. This unique item is currently on loan to the Bryan Museum in Galveston as part of their exhibit on the bubonic plague.

Photograph of petrified rat in a 1920's rat trap in the collection of the McFaddin Ward House Museum

Credit: Viewpoints, a publication of the McFaddin Ward House Museum, March 2020 Vol. 36/No. 2



UPCOMING JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2020

Meetings to be held at Noon at the Jefferson County Courthouse, 1149 Pearl Street, 3rd Floor, Beaumont, TX 77701 in the JCHC Conference Room. (All meetings subject to cancellation under state and federal COVID-19 guidelines.)

- May 13, 2020
- July 15, 2020
- September 16, 2020
- November 18, 2020

VOLUNTEER HOURS AND MEMBERSHIP

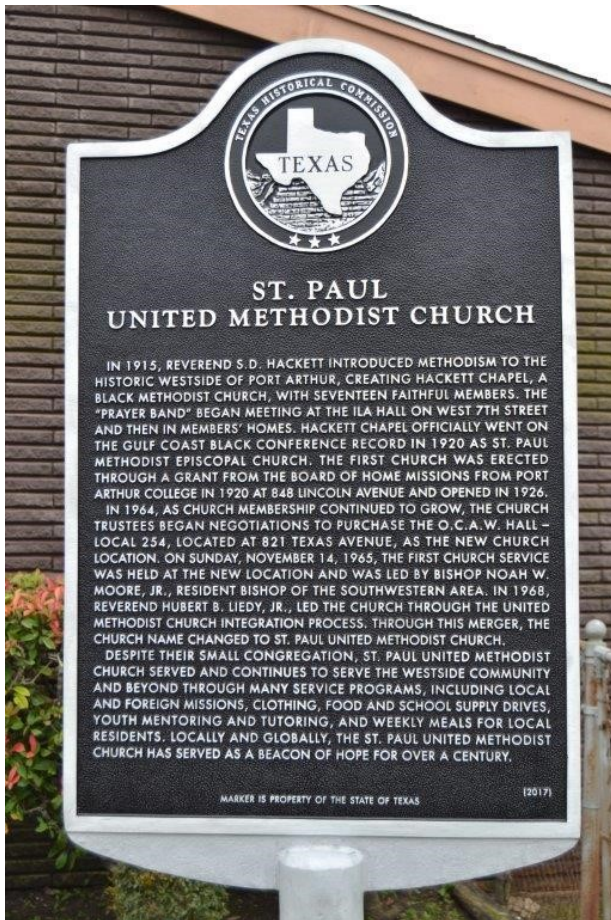
Any work in the preservation or promotion of Jefferson County History may be counted toward your volunteer hours. JCHC meetings and travel time to and from meetings also count as volunteer hours. Members are reminded that at least 50 hours of volunteer work per year is required of each member. Also with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

ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN PORT ARTHUR TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION



On March 13, 2020, a Texas State Historical marker dedication ceremony was held at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Port Arthur, Texas. The Hackett Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1915 was the first Black Methodist Episcopal Church on the historic westside of Port Arthur. The first church building began construction in 1920 at 848 Lincoln Ave. under the leadership of Rev. T.S. Pryor, and the church then adopted the name of St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church. Construction which was overseen by Mr. Ollie Jones, as contractor, was completed in 1926. Construction of the church was made possible through a grant from the Board of Home Mission from Port Arthur College.

In 1964 the church purchased the O.C.A.W. Hall located at 821 Texas Ave. as the new church location. Services began on Sunday, November 14, 1965 at the new location. In 1968 the Gulf Coast "Black" Conference and the Texas Conference merged. Through this merger the church changed to St. Paul United Methodist Church and became the first Black United Methodist Church in Port Arthur.

St. Paul United Methodist Church Historical Marker Dedication
Photo Credit: Leslie McMahan



**SUPPLEMENT TO BRIEF HISTORY OF KANSAS CITY,
PITTSBURG AND GULF/TEXARKANA AND FORT SMITH/
KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN, AND TEXAS & NEW ORLEANS/
SOUTHERN PACIFIC BRIDGES IN DOWNTOWN BEAUMONT, TX**

**1940 REPLACEMENT OF THE 1924 TEXAS & NEW ORLEANS
RAILROAD BRIDGE ACROSS THE NECHES RIVER AT
BEAUMONT, TX, BY LESLIE MCMAHEN, MARCH 2020**

When my original paper on the Neches River railroad bridges at Beaumont, Texas, was done in 2017, I noted that a picture of the 1924 T&NO (Southern Pacific) bridge was not available. Recently, a picture of the bridge was found in a March 1941 Railway Age magazine ad that was for the 1940 replacement bridge constructed by American Bridge Company. The ad noted that the 1924 bridge was fabricated by ABC in 1918 but War Department records indicate the bridge went into service on June 24, 1924. The 1940 replacement of the 1924 bridge was built in a very unique way.



View of the original 1924 swing span bridge that divided the Neches River into two narrow channels. At this point, the new pier for supporting the new 1940 bridge at the east end (left) of the old bridge has been constructed.



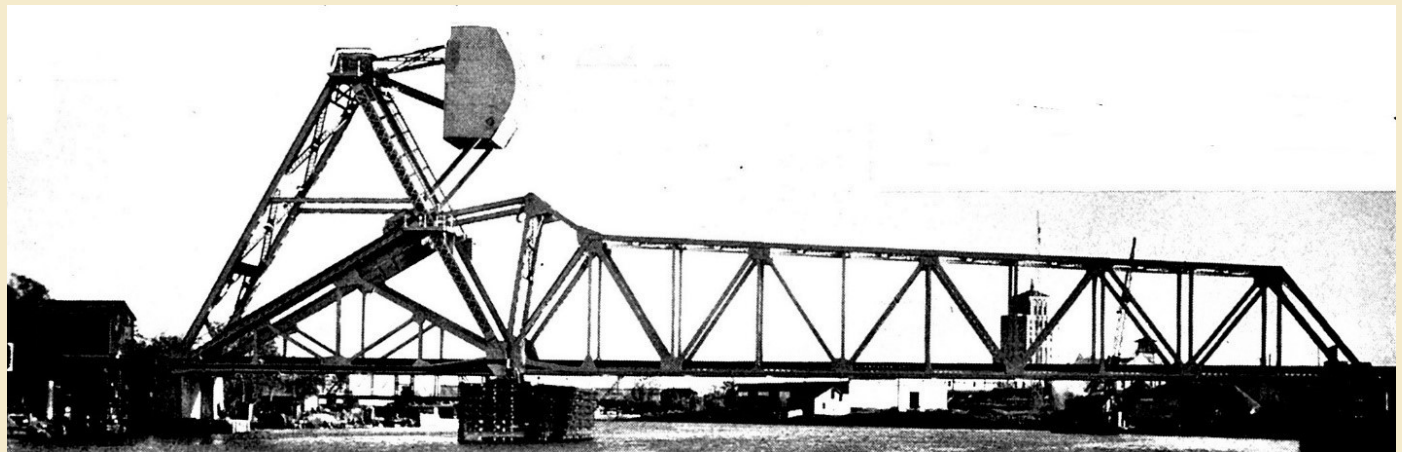
1940 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT CONTINUED

BY LESLIE MCMAHEN, MARCH 2020

The two panels at the east end of the 1924 bridge have been removed and counterweights have been added on the top chord to keep the old bridge's weight balanced about the pivot point. The bridge functioned as a bob-tailed swing span with no interference with the with the "A" framed erected for the new bridge. The railroad track was carried by steel framing through the "A" frame and across the new bridge's pier to the old bridge.



Once the "A" frame tower for the new bridge was completed, the bascule bridge leaf, along with lift machinery and counterweight, was erected in the vertical position without obstructing train movements or swinging of the bob-tailed span. Upon completion of the new structure, the old swing span was supported on two barges and was floated out of the way prior to lowering of the bascule leaf. Rail traffic was suspended for the first time for 11 hours during this final operation. The old swing span was carefully dismantled for future re-erection at another site (site unknown).



View of the completed bascule bridge which was put in service on April 1, 1940. The 230-foot long single leaf span provided a 202-foot clear navigation channel that provided enough clearance to permit ships to enter the upper harbor at Beaumont.

AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

Museum of the Gulf Coast

Check out photos and descriptions of some of the 35,000 items in the museum's collections at the link below.

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



Museum of the Gulf Coast

Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



Photo Credit: Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum website

Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown

Wildcatter Gazette

Check out past issues of the Wildcatter Gazette at the link below

Credit: [Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum website](#)

McFaddin-Ward House Museum

Viewpoints Newsletter

Viewpoints is an informative quarterly newsletter highlighting what's happening at the museum as well as providing themed historical interpretation.

Check out current and past issues at the link below.

Credit: [McFaddin-Ward House Museum](#)



McFaddin-Ward House Museum

Photo Credit: [McFaddin-Ward House Museum website](#)

**JEFFERSON
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Linda McMahan, Coordinator



*To preserve and
promote history within
the County.*

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

Jefferson County Historical Commission

Executive Board 2019 - 2020

Chairman, Theresa Goodness

1st Vice-Chairman, Bruce A. Hamilton

2nd Vice-Chairman, Les McMahan

Treasurer, Linda McMahan

Secretary, Jen Trenbeath

**JCHC MINI-MUSEUM
"FOREST PARK HIGH SCHOOL"**



The Jefferson County Historical Commission is proud to announce its latest exhibit, "Forest Park High School," housed in the Mini-Museum located on the first floor of the Jefferson County Courthouse. The exhibit contains a sampling of the rich history of Beaumont's Forest Park High School Trojans. The exhibit includes such items as Trojan football programs, annuals, pictures and news articles. We are thankful for JCHC member Brenda Jackson for putting this exhibit together. The Mini-Museum hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM through 5:00 PM. The exhibit will be on display until further notice.

Forest Park High School Memorabilia Exhibit in
Courthouse Mini-museum
Photo Credit: Linda McMahan

