

## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

Recently the [Beaumont Enterprise](#) published an article on the restoration project underway for the Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House in Beaumont. Kudos to Ed Touchet, Bruce Hamilton, and the other volunteers who are working so hard to preserve this 1906 historic home built during the Spindletop oil boom. Despite the daunting task, these preservation warriors have made significant strides in obtaining sponsors, rounding up volunteers, and in bringing attention to the plight of this property. Keep up the great work!

Thank you to our members for your time and service.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair



Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House restoration project  
Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

### VOLUME 2020, ISSUE 4

#### In this issue:

Liberty Regional CHC Meeting	2
Seborn Berry Gravesite	3

### AUGUST, 2020

#### Special points of interest:

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

## JEFFERSON COUNTY FAST FACTS

**3/6/1935**

Date of letter to Commissioner's Court from State Hwy. Engineer regarding communications from W.P.H. McFaddin advocating for State Hwy. 87 to be located along the Intra-Coastal Canal instead of along the beach. McFaddin was

willing to donate 227 acres for a right of way for relocation of Hwy 87 parallel to and about 500 ft. north of the present location from a point 12 miles west of Sabine Pass to the Galveston/Chambers County line. The State agreed to review the proposal.

**\$460,000**

Amount authorized by Texas Highway Commission Minute 41899 in 1957 to construct State Highway 362 from Boulevard on Pleasure Island to Sabine Lake, a distance of 10.5 miles.

## REGIONAL CHC MEETING

Liberty County Historical Commission will be hosting a regional CHC meeting on **Saturday, September 19, 2020**. The meeting will be in the Hartel Building, 318 San Jacinto Street, Liberty, Texas, where their CHC has an office. Plans include speakers from THC and a round-table discussion for counties to discuss their successes and challenges in historic preservation.

Coffee, tea, water, snacks and box lunches will be provided. After the meeting a private tour will be conducted of the Atascosito District Museum within Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center. Safe practices for COVID-19 will be observed.

Meet & Greet, Register, Coffee & Breakfast Snacks - 9:00 – 9:45 a.m.  
Speakers from the Texas Historical Commission\*- 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon  
Lunch (provided) 12:00 – 12:45  
CHC Introductions & Highlights 1:00 – 1:45 p.m.  
Tour of SHRL Museum and Facility 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. - optional

If you have not yet let Linda McMahan, our Coordinator, know of your plans to attend, please let her know as soon as possible so our head count may be revised.

## 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.)

- August 12, 2020 - Virtual meeting to be held.
- 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](mailto: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

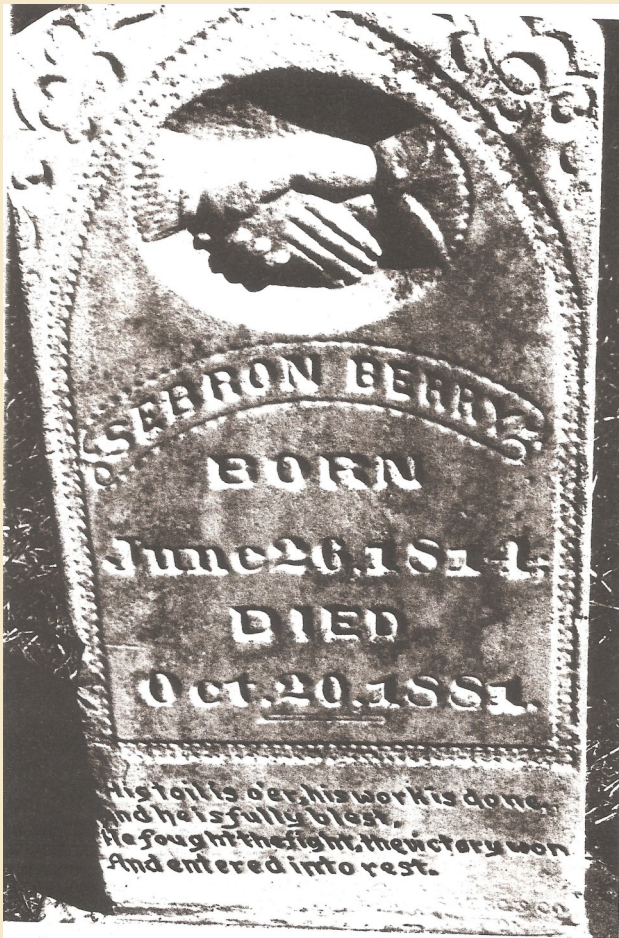
## SEBRON BERRY, CEMETERY IN PORT NECHES

BY PAUL PROSPERIE

In July, a company researching the Smith Bluff area for the construction of a new pipeline contacted the JCHC for information regarding old and abandoned cemeteries near the Neches River. They wanted to make sure that any construction would not disturb the known existing graves along the bluff. There are a few, and thanks to Mildred Wright, they are documented in her cemetery book. Unfortunately, there are very few headstones left (if they ever existed), but they do still stand as memorials to the dead. Two notable graves in this area belong to Elisha Brewer, located 100 yards from Amoco Road, and Sebron Berry, located on Sunoco property. Both were the subject of an article penned by historian W.T. Block and published in the *Beaumont Enterprise* on November 13, 1999. Most of the article relates to Elisha Brewer, but it does mention Berry's purchase of the Maria Turner Survey from Michael Staffen around 1865. It also acknowledges his marriage to Henrietta Staffen, "a young widow with five children."

According to family descendants, Sebron's place of burial was unknown until 1973, when the *Southeast Texas Genealogical Society* published an article about a lone grave in their November issue of the *Yellow Pages*. Since then, the family has uncovered a few interesting tidbits of information, but like a puzzle, they are searching for the next piece.

Sebron Berry was born in 1814 in Württemberg, Prussia (a state within the German Empire that existed from 1805 to 1918). It is not known to me when he arrived in the United States, but there is documentation that he fought in the Texas Revolution. He served in Capt. James Chesher's company from Jefferson County from January to April 1836. Sebron, a farmer, settled at Smith's Bluff alongside many other German immigrant families. There are a few tales and legends about the early settlers in W.T. Block's book, *Sapphire City of the Neches*, including a spat with Sebron's neighbor Michael Staffen, who was the father of Sebron's 30-year-old bride, Henrietta. This spat was an argument over "a property line that landed Staffen in jail for assault and battery."



Sebron Berry died in 1881, and his headstone reads:

**Sebron Berry**

**Born June 26, 1814**

**Died October 20, 1881**

**"His toil o'er, his work is done,**

**And he is fully blest,**

**He fought the fight, the victory won,**

His toil o'er, his work is done,  
And he is fully blest.  
He fought the fight, the victory won,  
And entered into rest.



## 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](http://museumofthegulfcoast.org)



Museum of the Gulf Coast

Photo Credit: [museumofthegulfcoast.org](http://museumofthegulfcoast.org)

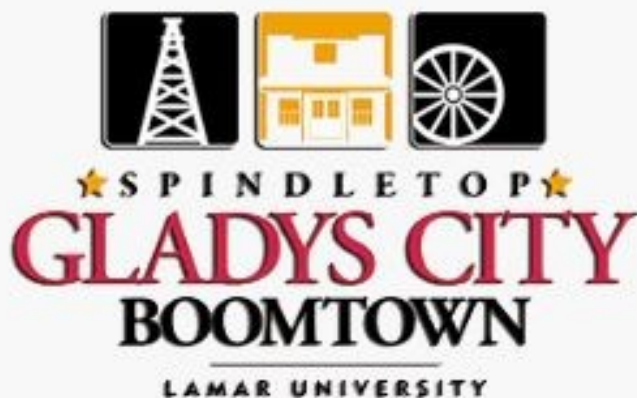


Photo Credit: Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum website

### Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown

#### **Lucas Gusher Re-enactment Schedule**

The Lucas Gusher gave up its riches for nine days before Anthony Lucas and the Hamill brothers could get the well under control. We re-create the gusher using water and only run it for about 2 minutes. But it is always fun to watch how high the water will blow and what direction the spray will take. It is always free to enjoy the gusher re-enactment. Regular admission fees apply to museum entrance.

Thursday, August 6 - 12:00 pm

Wednesday, August 12 - 1:00 pm

Saturday, August 22 - 11:00 am - Back to School gusher

Friday, August 28 - 12:00 pm

Credit: [Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum website](http://spindletopgladyscityboomtownmuseum.org)

### McFaddin-Ward House Museum

June 20 - October 31

The museum is excited to offer lectures in Fall 2020 which are free to the public. Topics include: The Westminster Dog Show and The History of College Football. Please watch the website for dates and times as these lectures are extremely popular and fill quickly.

Credit: [McFaddin-Ward House Museum website](http://mcfaddinwardhousemuseum.org)



McFaddin-Ward House Museum

Photo Credit: [McFaddin-Ward House Museum website](http://mcfaddinwardhousemuseum.org)

**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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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

The Jefferson County Historical Commission is seeking a new exhibit for the mini-museum. Past exhibits have included school memorabilia, historic postcards, courthouse artifacts, artwork depicting historic buildings by local artist, Larry Baggett, and other items celebrating the history of Jefferson County.

Please contact Linda McMahan, JCHC Coordinator, if you have an idea for a local history exhibit.