

# JCHC JOURNAL

J E F F E R S O N   C O U N T Y   H I S T O R I C A L   C O M M I S S I O N

## MAGNOLIA CEMETERY

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

- November 16,  
2022 10:00 a.m.

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The Second Annual Historic Magnolia Cemetery Tour has come to an end, but it is likely only the beginning for the opportunities to explore history within the cemetery's beautiful, hallowed grounds. Ten presenters, comprised of JCHC members and history enthusiasts from around Southeast Texas, were stationed around the cemetery to tell the tales of those who came before, and left their mark on Jefferson County. The tour was held on October 20th and 22nd and the weather couldn't have been better! Both days were well attended, and many attendees shared positive feedback with the volunteers. JCHC Cemetery Chair, Paul Prosperie, and Magnolia Cemetery Board President, Kelli Maness, both

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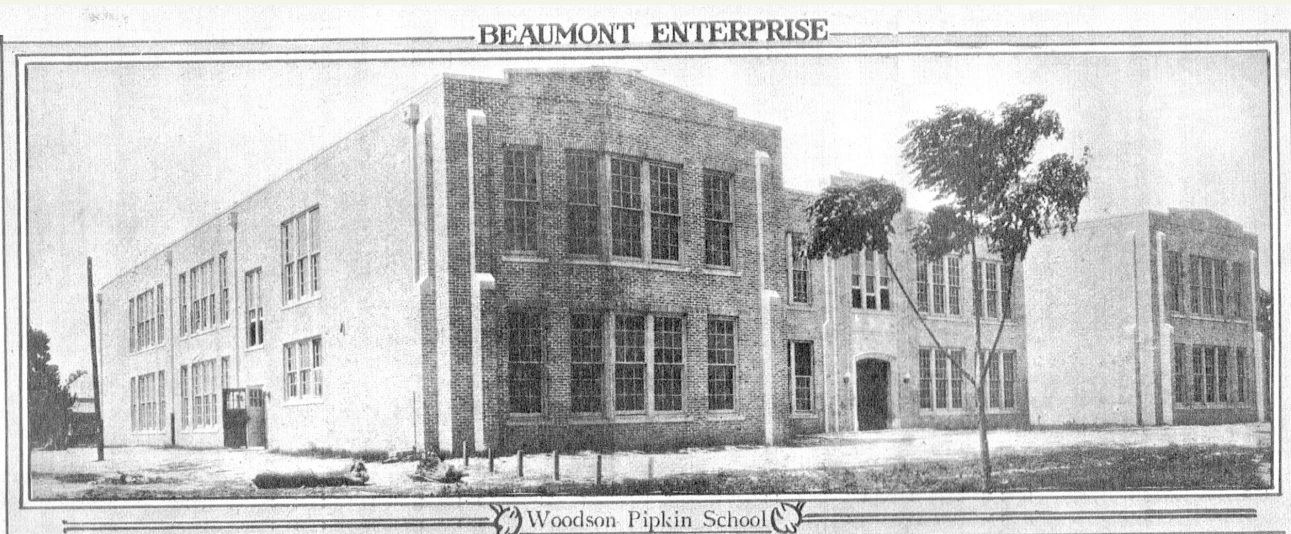
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deserve the thanks of the community for committing so much of their year to planning this event. For anyone who did not get the chance to take the tour, the histories featured this year will be posted on the Friends of the JCHC Facebook page.

On the horizon for the cemetery are two big changes. First, the remodeling of the former community building just inside the front gates of the cemetery is complete. The cemetery offices will be moved to this building, allowing the staff to be accessible by those visiting the cemetery, and the site of the former office will become additional burial grounds. The second big change is the planned expansion to the site of the former Pipkin School. A beautiful rendering is on display at the cemetery office for those who are interested. The plans incorporate pillars to imitate the originals still found at the main cemetery entrance, as well a gazebo .

Paul Propserie, Kelli Maness and Judy Linsley will be speaking at the McFaddin Ward House lecture series event, "Magnolia Cemetery: 1847 to the Present – Where the History of Beaumont Lives" on November 10, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. The lectures often fill up quickly so early arrival is recommended.

For those interested in future cemetery tours, please follow the Friends of the JCHC on Facebook.



**SESSIONS ATTENDED AT THE  
EAST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
CONFERENCE  
IN NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS  
OCTOBER 13-15, 2022**

**LESLIE MCMAHEN**

**Session III – How Big Data Changes Your Perspective on History**

Discussions of original Texas headright surveys and the tabulation of a myriad of facts surrounding them, mapping of enslaved peoples' transactions in Texas/documenting their production value in livestock and farming operations, and the history of a tract of land near Nacogdoches that seems to have escaped full documentation in the early Spanish land grants.

**Session V – Joint Session with the South Texas Historical Association**

Discussion on the History of Ranching in Texas (including introduction of new breeds and interbreeding of stock), and Location and Documentation of Information on Cattle, Cattle Owners, and Cattle Trails (including discussion on the importance of brands and branding).

**Session IX – A Look at Texas Military History**

Discussion of Presidios to Posts: The 300-Year Evolution of Texas Military Bases which included information on the placement of early Spanish presidios and missions and early Texas forts and military bases. Presenter mentioned Fort Griffin and the Battle of Sabine Pass in 1863, but upon questioning by me, he said he was not aware of Fort Sabine and the first Battle of Sabine Pass in 1862. I shared information with him after the session concluded.

The second discussion was the life history of a Doolittle Raider from Texas who survived the raid on Tokyo but was killed later in the war in a plane crash while flying supplies over the Himalayas to China.

The third discussion was The Dallas Story: The North American Aviation Plant During World War II. It detailed how the North American Aviation plant came to be to support the production for the war effort by building AT-6s, P-51s and B-24s. The was related discussion of other manufacturers of planes during the war.

**Session X – Museums Are Not Neutral – Issues in Narrating Texas' Past to the Public**

Discussion of The Role of Community in the San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield Association included how to formulate the idea of a display, what artifacts to include to tell the story, and how

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to lay them out for the best presentation effect.

The second discussion on Museums and Silences in Texas History and the third presentation on Museums and Underrepresentation of Minorities in Texas Prison History were both not worth the time as their primary focus was a political promotion of a position against “white supremacy, colonization and sexual orientation” in the prison system.

### **Session XIII – Fiddles and Jazz: Texas Musicians Make a Mark**

Discussion of God’s Fiddler: Rev. J.B. Crandill and the Legitimization of Texas Fiddle Music covered Crandill’s influence on making the fiddle a major part of country and folk music.

The second discussion If You Got The Money, I Got The Time: The Musical Legacy of Corsicana-born Lefty Frizzell covered his musical career, his music/singing style, and his influence on country music and other artists.

The third discussion Louise Tobin: A Texas Jazz Singer and the Last Surviving Musician from the Swing Era covered Tobin’s birth in Texas, how she made her way into the Big Band circuit as a renowned singer, and her marriage to Beaumont’s Harry James. Tobin is still alive today at the age of 104.



*Photo Credit: LouiseTobin.com*

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### **Session XVI – West Texas Icons: Football, Cadillacs and the XIT Ranch**

Discussion of Stanley March III – The Cadillac Ranch and His Texas Panhandle detailed March's life and his famous Cadillac Ranch in its various incarnations.

The second discussion When the Vast XIT Ranch Expanded to Montana detailed the operation of the original XIT Ranch in the panhandle of Texas, its expansion of operations into Montana and the eventual retraction to just a Texas operation. It discussed how its ranch hands would move back and forth between the two operations and how cattle were moved to Montana.

The third discussion West Texas Lightning: The Life and Times of Joe Don Looney detailed the rather tumultuous personal and sports life of Looney who seemed to be his own worst enemy in life. Though he eventually settled down in later life, he never became the sports star he could have been.

### **Session XIX – ETHA at 60: Past, Present, and Future**

Past, present and future officers of the ETHA presented information on how the organization was formed (1927 1932, then folded), its reformation in 1962 and continuing to date, what its goals have been up to the present, and what the new officers have plans for in the near future.

### **Session XXI – Women and War: World War I, World War II and the Cold War**

Discussion of the World War I The Texas State Division, Women's Committee, and the Council of Defense include the various positions women held in the war effort.

The second discussion Hitler's World War II "Stepford Wives" Versus "We Can Do It" Texas Ladies detailed how education of women in Germany devolved in WWII whereas it evolved in the United States at the same time due to different perceptions of the purpose or usefulness of women to the war effort.

The third discussion Houston Leads the Way: Cold War Domestic Ideology and Women's Entrepreneurship discussed how women-owned businesses became more prominent, with many continuing to today even if under new ownerships or names.

### **Session XXV – Reading and Writing the New Deal**

Discussion Letters from Home: Texans Write Washington covered a case study of how the Milford ISD projects materialized during the WPA period, and presented examples of their communications to keep the projects moving.

The second discussion Czech and Spanish Read About the New Deal Work Programs: Czech and

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Spanish Newspapers in Texas 1935-1945 gave examples of how the State's Czech and Spanish populations were introduced to the WPA, kept informed of its projects, and kept informed of work opportunities with the WPA and CCC.

All in all, this ETHA conference was probably the best, or near so, of the ones I have attended. I was able to meet interesting folks and was able to pass along relevant information to a few of the presenters.

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### INFORMATION FROM THE ETHA CONFERENCE



**TEXAS**  
**ARCHEOLOGICAL**  
**SOCIETY**  
www.txarch.org

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**93rd Annual Meeting**  
**October 21-23, 2022—Tyler, Texas**

This meeting will be held in conjunction with the East Texas Archeological Conference on the campus of the University of Texas at Tyler. In addition to poster and paper presentations by TAS members, two special lectures will be offered.

Friday October 21, 7:00 pm, Public Forum:  
**Bobby Gonzalez, Chairman, Caddo Nation**

Saturday October 22, 7:00 pm, Banquet:  
**Rolfe Mandel, Director, Kansas Geological Survey; State Geologist of Kansas**

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**Rock Art Academy**  
**February 25-26, 2023—El Paso, Texas**

The 2023 Rock Art Academy is a two-day Texas Archeology Academy that explores regional rock art archeological sites, Mogollon archeological sites, and how investigators use this information to interpret the human and natural histories of an area.

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**Archeology 101 Academy**  
**March 24-26, 2023—Goldthwaite, Texas**


Get an introduction to the archeology of the state of Texas and how to identify archeological sites, both pre-European and historic in nature. Learn to accurately record sites in a way that allows archeologists to assess the importance and significance of a site or sites, and contribute to the synthesis of the state's cultural heritage.

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**Summer 2023 Field School**  
**June 2023—Nacogdoches, Texas**

Keep an eye on our website for information as it is posted.

See the TAS website for more information about the society and our activities: [www.txarch.org](http://www.txarch.org)



*Call for Papers*  
**60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kennedy Assassination Conference**  
 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, May 20, 2023  
 Meeting Room Angelina County Chamber of Commerce  
 1615 South Chestnut Lufkin, Texas 75901  
 \$10 per person (For one or all sessions)

*Schedule:*

9-9:50 a.m. Opening videos, Dr. Jerry Hopkins "A Survey of JFK Bibliography"

9:50 a.m.-10 a.m. Break

10-10:50 a.m. Stanley Fletcher, "Lee Harvey Oswald Acted Alone"

10:50-11 a.m. Break

11-11:50 a.m. Carroll Scoggin Brincefield "Did LBJ Kill JFK?"

11:50 a.m.-1 p.m. Pizza and refreshments provided by Angelina County Genealogical Society

1-1:50 p.m. Paull Chachere Topic to be determined

1:50-2 p.m. Break

2-2:50 p.m. Unscheduled

2:50-3 p.m.

3-3:50 p.m. Unscheduled

4 p.m. Adjourn

For more information or for questions, contact Dickie Dixon, President, Angelina County Genealogical Society, (936) 671-1419 or [dixonhershel51@gmail.com](mailto:dixonhershel51@gmail.com)

## **MARKER SPOTLIGHT**

### **A.W. “MOON” MULLICAN**



*A.W. “Moon” Mullican at a piano. Photo Credit: Museum of the Gulf Coast*

Born in the small town of Corrigan in 1909, Aubry Wilson Mullican became famous as a country and western singer and songwriter. His father was a farmer and the African-American farm workers and sharecroppers influenced his music greatly. Mullican began his career when he was only 16, playing the piano in bars and brothels in the Houston area. His habit of performing all night long and sleeping during the day earned him the nickname, “Moon.” He also had a unique style of playing the piano, known as the “two-finger right-handed” piano style which later became

his trademark. Mullican shouted his words, believing it was more important to be heard than to be precise. He was a fun-loving man who when asked why he chose the piano said, “the beer kept sliding off my fiddle!” By the 1940s his reputation grew. He played with various bands and recorded numerous albums which included his biggest hits, “Goodnight Irene,” “Mona Lisa” and “I’ll sail my ship alone.” He was one of the first solo singer-pianists to play at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Mullican performed throughout the U.S., Europe and Vietnam sharing the stage with the likes of Hank Williams, Ernie Ford and Red Foley. Overall, Mullican accompanied other singers and musicians on more than 200 recordings as well as recording his own music. Before dying at the age of 58, he grew to be known as the “King of the Hillbilly Piano Players.” At his funeral, friend and former Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis delivered his eulogy. His epitaph reads, “I’ll sail my ship alone.” The Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame inducted Moon Mullican in 1974.

## THE FERRY GUNBOAT CLIFTON – A TREASURE OF JEFFERSON COUNTY CIVIL WAR HISTORY

MATT REEVES

Most of us in southeast Texas are at least aware of the September 8, 1863 battle of Sabine Pass. Lieutenant Richard W. “Dick” Dowling is a hero in Texas folklore, and the battle has often been compared, with obverse results, to the battle of the Alamo.

Those of us who enjoy digging deeper into the battle, and into the history of Civil War Texas in general, are familiar with its actors, one of the most prominent of which was USS Clifton. A Brooklyn-built civilian ferryboat that briefly ran the Staten Island ferry line for Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1861, she was purchased by the US Navy and drastically altered for service as a gunboat. Her shallow draft and ability to carry heavy weight – in civilian service, for passengers, wagons, horses, and some cargo, and in Navy service for sailors, heavy cannon, mortar shells, and marines – made her an ideal vessel for naval operations in the bayous and shallow bays (lagoons in 19<sup>th</sup> century parlance) of Texas and Louisiana.

After conversion to naval service, Clifton joined US Admiral David G. Farragut’s expedition against New Orleans, where she towed mortar rafts and their ammunition for the bombardment of CS Forts Jackson and St. Phillip. She later participated in Farragut’s attack on the CS batteries at Vicksburg, where her decks were first stained with blood by enemy fire while hauling off the grounded USS Jackson. Clifton also engaged CS batteries during an early-war reconnaissance at Mobile Bay, captured Fort Burton in Louisiana, participated in the capture of Galveston, bombarded Port Lavaca, and ultimately attacked Fort Griffin at Sabine Pass.

After being captured by Confederate forces at Sabine Pass, Clifton served as a gunboat there for the Texas Marine Department – CS Texas’s state navy. Confederate Major General John B. Magruder, famous for his Mexican-American War heroics and as one of Robert E. Lee’s commanders during the Peninsula Campaign in Virginia, temporarily made his headquarters aboard Clifton after the battle. As she served little purpose being bottled up in the Sabine River, Magruder ordered her converted to a blockade runner. She was converted – for the third time in her career – at the Levingston yard in Orange, where her armor was, presumably, removed in order to lighten her for the run to Vera Cruz, Mexico. Her excellent guns – the quality of which were a tremendous boost to Confederate defenses – were removed and installed at Fort Griffin. Due to her size and carrying capacity, Clifton presumably carried a large amount of Texas cotton, though almost all of it would be lost on her first attempt at running the blockade.

On the morning of March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1864, a US naval blockade commander spotted a fire through the heavy fog off Sabine Pass, and at daybreak he sent several boats to investigate. The launches discovered Clifton, aground at Texas Point – the extreme southeastern tip of the state of Texas – and thoroughly ablaze. She had run aground on the mud flat, and her crew being unable

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to extricate her, they destroyed her rather than allowing her, along with her highly valuable cotton, to be captured. A few scorched bales of cotton were later recovered from the wreck, but Clifton was completely destroyed above the waterline, her iron steam machinery protruding for nearly a century after above what was then a shallow mud flat. Some of the machinery was salvaged after the war, and her walking beam – recently restored and now on display at the Sabine Pass Battleground Park – was recovered in 1911. She served the United States again during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when her wreck was utilized by the Corps of Engineers as a reference point during construction of the Sabine Pass jetties.

Besides her involvement in the battle of Sabine Pass, Clifton is a treasure of Jefferson County history because her wreck lies buried under the mud at Texas Point. Since her loss there in 1864, coastal geology has formed a new beach further south of the wreck. Today, her lower hull, boilers, and likely some machinery lie buried about ten feet under the black clay and oyster shells that constitute much of the Jefferson County beach.

What follows will be a series of in-depth articles about Clifton in this journal, describing her brief, dynamic, and violent life. As she lived through three incarnations of ship types, as a ferryboat, gunboat, and blockade runner, and was vital to the interests of such prominent Civil War personages as Cornelius Vanderbilt, Frederick Crocker, David D. Porter, William Renshaw, William B. Franklin, Dick Dowling, Leon Smith, John B. Magruder, and David G. Farragut, her rich story deserves to be much better known.



Photographic reproduction of Battle of Sabine Pass survivor, T.L. Hatch, standing inside a walking beam from the USS Clifton. Circa 1920. *Photo Credit: Tyrrell Historical Library Digital Archives, John H. Walker Papers*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **November 4-** Movies at the McFaddins Presents: Coco

McFaddin-Ward House invites your family to join us Friday, Nov. 4 for a “Movies at the McFaddins” free movie night featuring Coco! Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets, chairs, food, and drinks as they gather on the historic home’s lawn at 1906 McFaddin Ave in Beaumont. The evening will also include festive activities. Guests are invited to roast smores, complete crafts, and learn about the tradition of Día de los Muertos. Gates open at 5:30 and the movie begins at 6:30. For more information, call 409.832.1906.

### **November 10-** 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm *Magnolia Cemetery: 1847 to the Present*

– *Where the History of Beaumont Lives* The lecture panel consisting of Kelli Maness, Paul Prosperie, and Judy Linsley will share the history, current state, and interesting stories of the Magnolia Cemetery, created in the 1840s by William McFaddin. Veterans, community leaders, and local characters are interred in the cemetery among an array of interesting stone monuments and markers. A guided cemetery tour, by reservation, is offered Friday, November 11, 2022. Visit [www.mcfaddin-ward.org/](http://www.mcfaddin-ward.org/) event for more information.

**November 10–** 5:30 pm—7:30 pm Music and Wine at Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum with live music by Julian Primeaux. \$10 for non-members. Visit [facebook.com/SpindletopGC](https://facebook.com/SpindletopGC) for more info.

**November 17–** Heritage Happy Hour. Come chat with us in a space we’ve never been to, Riverside Church in the old Westminster Presbyterian Church. We’ll learn about their preservation efforts and what goes on in the building today. For more information visit [www.beaumontheritage.org](http://www.beaumontheritage.org)

## **GET IN TOUCH**

JCHC Offices: 1149 Pearl Street—3rd floor

Beaumont, TX 77701

409-835-8701

[Www.facebook.com/FRIENDSofJCHC](https://www.facebook.com/FRIENDSofJCHC)