



JEFFERSON COUNTY

Historical Commission

Laurie Leister
Coordinator
Jen Trenbeath
Secretary/Treasurer

Theresa Goodness, Chair

Steven P. Lewis
1st Vice-Chair
Don Smart
2nd Vice-Chair

Meeting Minutes

The Regular Meeting of the Jefferson County Historical Commission (JCHC) was held on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the offices of the JCHC, 3rd Floor Jefferson County Courthouse

Order of Business:

1. Call to Order.
Theresa Goodness called the meeting to order at 10:00 am
2. Determination of Quorum
Members Present: Theresa Goodness, Kate Hambright, Paul Prosperie, Jay Camp, Jessie Davis, William Gray, Bruce Hamilton, Brenda Jackson, Steven Lewis, Don Smart, Jennifer Advisors Present: Linda and Les McMahan and Lynn Simon. Guest: Amy Lovoi - Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, Linda Lacour – Tyrrell Historical Library, Shelby Brannon – Beaumont Heritage Society and A. J. Appling – The Football Capital of the World Museum and Foundation, Tyraan Albert – City of Beaumont, David Stone – Alamo Letter Project.
3. Citizens' Communications.
Amy Lovoi, A. J. Appling and Shelby Brannon gave an update on their organizations.
4. Call, Receive Information and Take Appropriate Action on:

Introduction of Guests – **The guests introduced themselves and gave reports about their organizations.**

ACTION ITEMS:

Secretary's Report – Jen Trenbeath

5. Consider and possibly approve minutes of previous meeting. **Don Smart made the motion to approve. William Gray seconded. APPROVED.**

Coordinator's Report – Laurie Leister

- Staff report from Coordinator. – **See Report Attached**

Treasurer's Report – Jen Trenbeath

- Report of Expenditures and remaining Budget – **See Report Attached**

Chair's Report – Chair Theresa Goodness

6. Discuss status of our annual JCHC Calendar project (2026) to promote our county's history and to be distributed to all school districts and to preservation partners in Jefferson County.
7. Discuss project approved by Commissioner's Court to install an Alamo Letter monument on the grounds of the new courthouse. David Stone gave an update on the status of the project. **The location is recommended between the two flag poles in front of the new courthouse.**
8. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve an expenditure out of budgeted travel funds for registration/travel fees for one or more members of JCHC and/or the Coordinator to attend the Texas Historical Commission 2026 Real Places Conference to be held in Austin on April 8 - 10, 2026. The conference will be held in-person and virtually. **Jennifer Trenbeath made the motion to approve two people to attend the meeting and for one virtual fee for attendance, Steven Lewis seconded. APPROVED.**
9. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve an expenditure out of budgeted funds for an air purifier for the JCHC library to reduce dust and mold in our archives. Costs for purifier and filters should be less than \$300.00. **Kate Hambright made the motion to approve. Bruce Hamilton Seconded. APPROVED.**
10. Discuss Spindletop 125th Anniversary celebration and status of new interpretive panels and improvements at Spindletop Park. **Report Attached. Ribbon Cutting is scheduled for Jan. 10, 2026 at 9:30 in the morning.**
11. Discuss Port of Beaumont's project to restore a Buda rail bumper. Les McMahan reported about the Port's plan to pressure wash the bumper and to get a Historical Marker for it. **On Oct. 14, Theresa Goodness and several commission members viewed the Buda Bumper at the Port of Beaumont. The Port will mount the bumper on a concrete pad and place it at the corner of Franklin and Blanchette on property they own. They also offered to pay for a marker for it. Les McMahan is writing the nomination. Steve Lewis discovered the bumper in 2024 took pictures of it and let the Port know it was historically significant.**

Committee Reports

Historical Preservation:

Beaumont Historical Landmark Commission – Kate Hambright

- Report on Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness considered by Beaumont Landmark Commission. **Kate's reports are attached.**

Tyrrell Historical Library – Steven P. Lewis

- Report on activities of the Tyrrell Historical Library Association. **Steven's Report is attached.**

Photos of Historic Buildings - Steven P. Lewis

- Report on historic building photography project. – **Steven passed around pictures he has of various historical buildings across the city. Steven's Report is attached.**

Sam Houston State Library – Don Smart

- Report on research projects conducted at the state library. **Don announced there will be a Christmas celebration at the library.**

Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House Restoration – Theresa Goodness

- Report on status of restoration of the historic home. **Report Attached.**

Historical Markers and Research – Kate Hambright

12. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve submission of an application for a Historic Texas Cemetery designation for Town Grave Yard. **Kate gave a detailed report – See Attached. Don Smart made a motion to approve. Paul Prosperie seconded. APPROVED.**
13. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve submission of an application for a Historic Texas Cemetery designation for Sheffield Cemetery. **Kate gave a report – See Attached. Jessie Davis made a motion to approve. Paul Prosperie seconded. APPROVED.**
14. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve submission of an application for a Historic Texas Cemetery designation for Martha Mack Cemetery. **Kate gave a report – See Attached. William Gray made a motion to approve. Paul Prosperie seconded. APPROVED.**

- Report on Status of Marker Applications/Dedications.
- Report on Marker Survey/Maintenance.

History Appreciation:

- Report on current Courthouse Mini-museum exhibits and discussion of proposed exhibits. – Jen Trenbeath – **Bruce and Laurie will decide the next exhibit and let Brenda know. Jennifer reported on the work done on the Westminster Presbyterian Church. The pipe organ was disassembled and removed.**
- Report on updates to JCHC website and social media. – **William Gray gave a report See Report Attached**
- Report on history articles in newspaper and events at the Stark House Museum. – Katherine Leister - **Absent**
- Report on Coastal History. – **Jay Camp – Jay had to leave**
- Report on Mid-County history research and projects. – **William Gray gave a report, See Report Attached.**

Archeology Committee – Brenda Jackson

- Report on activities that promote the preservation of archeological resources. No new report.

Cemetery Committee – Paul Prosperie

Report on pending applications for Historic Texas Cemetery Designations, cemetery surveys, clean-up days or other similar activities. **Kate Hambright gave reports.**

Report on pending application for Historic Texas Cemetery Designation, cemetery surveys, clean up or other similar activities.

Report on research and other preservation activities pertaining to historically Black cemeteries – Jessie Davis – **Jessie thanked everyone for attending the marker dedication on Nov. 15, 2025.**

Certified Local Government (CLG) – Theresa Goodness

15. Discuss status of project to develop one or more National Register nominations identified in our recent historic resources survey, including status of any pending or completed Determination of Eligibility Submissions to the Texas Historical Commission.

- Port Neches Jail
- American Rice Growers Cooperative Association- Cheek Rice Dryer (NKA Doguet's Rice Dryer)
- Nederland Dutch Windmill Museum
- Site of former Nome School
- Levingston Funeral Home in Groves

16. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve submitting a request for approval from Commissioner's Court to submit a FY 2026 Certified Local Government Grant application to the Texas Historical Commission for a National Register nomination project. The grant deadline is January 9, 2026. **Theresa announced that THC has approved the Port Neches Jail for nomination to NR, but we have not heard back from THC on the approval to nominate to NR for the Rice Dryer or the Windmill. Theresa thinks we have money to pay for two nominations. Jennifer made a motion to submit nominations to THC for National Register designations for the Port Neches Jail, the Rice Dryer, and the Windmill. JCHC will prepare the nomination for the Jail in-house and hire a contractor to write the nomination for the Rice Dryer and the Windmill. If we do not hear back from THC on the remaining two properties, we will let the commissioners know we were not able to use all of the grant money. Paul Prosperie seconded. APPROVED.**

Other Business

17. Discussion on any other item not on agenda without taking action. Receive reports on matters of community interest from elected officials, staff, or members without taking action. **Shelby Brannan reported on the plans for the 250th Anniversary celebration. Theresa reported that the Beaumont City Council voted to install a state historical marker at the Nature Center (old CCC Bldg.) at Tyrrell Park for the Patillo v State Undertold Story.**

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm

COORDINATOR'S REPORT
NOVEMBER 19, 2025

1. I want to thank everyone here for the warm welcome you have given me. I am excited to help you all do the work of documenting Jefferson County's history. Jen has been a tremendous help getting me settled and I am hoping she will continue to look over my shoulder to make sure I have everything covered.
2. I have spent the past few weeks getting familiar with the files, the books and the equipment here. I have moved most of the loose papers to the boxes on top of the file cabinet and will be filing these as time allows. I have also been gathering up the old CD's and hope to be able to look at those and see what can be downloaded.
3. I am filing the loose papers in file folders. Once this is complete, my plan is to go back through the folders.
4. Please look at the THC Magazine, there is an article about Beaumont. Also, the Examiner and the Enterprise had good articles about the Marker Dedications this past weekend.
5. I met virtually with a committee at Gladys City that is planning the 125th celebration of Spindletop. I am hoping that Shelby Brannan with the Heritage Society and Jen Trenbeath can also help with this. Gladys City is planning on their big celebration to be Jan. 17. I would like the Park's ribbon cutting for the new interpretative panels and newly replaced wood ramp and benches, to be Jan. 10. I will be coordinating with Gladys City on this event as a volunteer.
6. There is a lot going on with the 250th celebration of our country. I have heard about some state activities, but do any of you know anything about local plans?

BUDGET REPORT - 2025-2025 FISCAL YEAR
BUDGET REPORT AS OF NOV. 19, 2025

LINE ITEM	BUDGET	SPENT	REMAINING
30-78 - Supplies	\$2,000.00	\$133.30	\$1,866.70
30-90 - Education & Demonstration	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
40-52 - Postage	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
50-05 - Mileage	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$700.00
50-12 - Historical Commission	\$5,200.00	\$0.00	\$5,200.00
50-21 - Dues & Subscriptions*	\$850.00	\$0.00	\$850.00
50-62 - Travel	\$1,750.00	\$0.00	\$1,750.00
Total	\$13,800.00		\$13,800.00

Real Places Conference \$1,750.00
 2 people and 1 virtual

*Dues & Subscriptions
 Beaumont Heritage Society - \$100
 Preservation Texas - \$100
 National Alliance Preservation Commission - \$150
 Tyrrell Historical Library Association - \$50
 BUILD, dba Beaumont Main Street - \$50
 Alliance for Texas History - \$50
 Texas Historical Foundation - \$50
 Port Arthur Historical Society - \$75
 Additional Dues If Needed - \$225.00

Jefferson County Historical Commission

Chair's Report – Chair Theresa Goodness

6. Discuss status of our annual JCHC Calendar project (2026) to promote our county's history and to be distributed to all school districts and to preservation partners in Jefferson County.
 - The 2026 calendars have been printed, and mailed out to all the school districts, county elected officials, and preservation partners.
 - Copies are available for JCHC members and advisors.
 - Extra copies will be distributed to the public at JCHC events such as marker dedications and cemetery tours.

7. Discuss project approved by Commissioner's Court to install an Alamo Letter monument on the grounds of the new courthouse.
 - On October 21, 2025, Commissioner's Court approved the installation on the courthouse grounds of a large bronze plaque containing Col. William Travis's Alamo Letter.
 - The granite monument and bronze plaque is a project of the Alamo Letter Society, with a goal of placing the Letter at each courthouse in all 254 counties in Texas.
 - Judge Branick asked me, as Chair, to coordinate placement of the monument with the Alamo Letter Society and our building superintendent. Fortunately, the Hardin County Historical Commission Chair, Jimmy McKim, graciously gave me all the dimensions, weight and photos of the Alamo Letter monument recently installed in their county.
 - Due to the fact an antiquities permit would be needed from THC to place the monument on the grounds of the historic courthouse, the decision was made to place it on the grounds of the new courthouse. The Alamo Letter Society Chair, David Stone, would like the monument placed in close proximity of the flagpoles, and in consultation with the Building Superintendent, a location three feet from the retaining wall and centered between the flagpoles has been chosen.
 - The Alamo Letter Society is still fundraising for this project and will incur all costs of the monument and installation.

8. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve an expenditure out of budgeted travel funds for registration/travel fees for one or more members of JCHC and/or the Coordinator to attend the Texas Historical Commission 2026 Real Places Conference to be held in Austin on April 8 - 10, 2026. The conference will be held in-person and virtually.
 - Early bird pricing for a Basic registration is \$395.
 - Virtual Registration is \$235.
 - Courthouse Steward registration is \$195.
 - Hotel rooms at the Renaissance Austin Hotel are \$239 per night.

9. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve an expenditure out of budgeted funds for an air purifier for the JCHC library to reduce dust and mold in our archives. Costs for purifier and filters should be less than \$300.00.
 - Estimated cost for a room air purifier and extra activated carbon filters is \$300.

10. Discuss Spindletop 125th Anniversary celebration and status of new interpretive panels and improvements at Spindletop Park.

Report from Laurie Leister:

SPINDLETOP 125TH ANNIVERSARY

A little over a year ago, Jennifer Trenbeath, Shelby Brannan and Laurie Leister began to discuss the condition of the Spindletop Park. The County was mowing the park, but the park improvements were in poor condition. In addition, the way-finding signs were removed.

Our assessment of the park determined the following repairs were needed to make the park safe for the public. The interpretive panels were faded, damaged, and needed replacing. They were replaced about 10 years ago which was the second time they had been replaced since the park's inception in 2001. The wooden wheelchair ramp was rotten and had missing planks making its use as a handicapped ramp impossible and unsafe. In addition, the railings on the ramp and the viewing platform were rotten, as were the benches. The whole platform needed to be pressure washed and repainted.

The Beaumont Heritage Society agreed to act as the non-profit organization for us to ask for donations to replace the panels and to make repairs if the county was unwilling to help. Shelby offered to make a request to the McFaddin-Ward foundation on behalf of the Beaumont Heritage Society for a grant to replace the panels. The request was for \$28,000.00, which included higher quality panels that have a 20-year life as opposed to the original and current panels that had a 10-year expected life.

The Beaumont Heritage Society received the grant money, ordered the panels through the original designer, Drew Patterson, the panels were delivered and installed by the county.

We then requested Commissioner Alfred to make the necessary repairs to the park in preparation of the 125th Anniversary Celebration which is planned for January 10, 2026 at 10:00 am at the Park.

We are all grateful Commissioner Alfred made all the repairs to the park and who secured new way-finding signs through TXDOT.

Laurie Leister
Past Member of the Spindletop 2001 Commission
November 10, 2025

11. Discuss Port of Beaumont's project to restore a Buda rail bumper.

- On October 14, 2025, Port of Beaumont Director, Chris Fisher, invited JCHC members to view the proposed installation site of a Buda Rail Bumper, possibly the last one in existence in the county.
- This equipment was photographed by Steven Lewis in 2024 on a lot the Port owns, and he asked for help identifying what it was.
- With Les McMahan's help, the manufacturer was identified, and the Port notified of the historical nature of the equipment.
- The Port plans to restore the Buda Bumper in-house, install it on a concrete pad near their new parking lot on the corner of Franklin and Blanchette Streets.
- The Port has offered to sponsor an historical marker for the Buda Bumper, and Les McMahan, our railroad expert, has been working on the research for the narrative.

Certified Local Government Committee Report

November 19, 2025

15. Discuss status of project to develop one or more National Register nominations identified in our recent historic resources survey, including status of any pending or completed Determination of Eligibility Submissions to the Texas Historical Commission.

- Port Neches Jail, 633 Ave. C, Port Neches, TX
- Livingston Funeral Home, 5601 39th Street, Groves, TX
- Tex Ritter Historical Park/Dutch Windmill Museum, 1500 Boston Ave., Nederland, TX
- Former Nome Colored School, 1000 Block N. 3rd St, Nome, TX
- Douget's Rice Milling Co. Rice Dryer, 5702 Industry, Cheek, TX

On 9/22/25, a Determination of Eligibility Submission, researched and prepared by Marker Chair, Kate Hambright, and Chair Theresa Goodness, was submitted to THC for the Port Neches Jail. On 10/17/25, Bonnie Tipton, THC's National Register Coordinator, advised JCHC that Port Neches Jail is eligible for listing in the National Register.

On 10/30/25, a Determination of Eligibility Submission, researched and prepared by Marker Chair, Kate Hambright, and Chair Theresa Goodness, was submitted to THC for the American Rice Growers Cooperative Association – Cheek Rice Dryer NKA Doguet's Rice Dryer. We are awaiting a decision from the National Register Coordinator.

On November 13, 2025, a Determination of Eligibility Submission, researched and prepared by William Gray with assistance from Marker Chair, Kate Hambright, was submitted to THC for the Nederland Dutch Windmill Museum. We are awaiting a decision from the National Register Coordinator.

On 10/10/25, Marker Chair, Kate Hambright, and Chair Theresa Goodness met with Ashley Spears, daughter of the current owners of a building formerly known as the Nome Colored School. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the National Register project and to ask for her family's help in obtaining current and historic photos of the building and any history they could provide. Ms. Spears advised her mother was a former teacher at the school, and she knew others who had worked there. Ms. Spears promised to share our project with her family and work on finding us some resource material. An oral history taken from her mother is another possibility. On 11/10/25, Ms. Spears advised that her father had passed away a few days prior. She asked us to contact her next month after the family has time to deal with her father's loss.

On 10/27/25, Chair Theresa Goodness visited Livingston Funeral Home to take exterior photos. The building was closed so interior photos were unable to be taken. Some research of newspaper articles and city directories has been conducted, and emails and calls made to the business seeking historic photos and additional resources. A reply is expected soon from a long time employee.

16. Discuss, consider, and possibly approve submitting a request for approval from Commissioner's Court to submit a FY 2026 Certified Local Government Grant application to the Texas Historical Commission for a National Register nomination project. The grant deadline is January 9, 2026.

Report of Theresa Goodness, Board Member of Hinchee House Restoration Project
November 19, 2025

A Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House Restoration Project (CGHH) board meeting took place Thursday, November 13, 2025.

A grant has been awarded to CGHH to build a temporary exterior wall where the Solarium has been lost to storm damage. The Texas Historical Commission has reviewed the project and granted permission to proceed. Our contractor has filed for city permits and is expected to begin work on the project sometime this month.

CGHH continues to seek grants to further restoration projects and recently filed for a grant to fund electrical work on the house.

A western-themed bingo fundraiser was scheduled for November 22, 2025, and to be held next door to the Hinchee House at the VFW Post 1806. Unfortunately, due to an issue with catering for the event, the fundraiser has been moved to February. Details will be shared once finalized.

Meeting Notes 19 November 2025

Tyrrell Historical Library: I attended a talk on 23 October at the Tyrrell presented by John R. Lundberg on his book *The Texas Lowcountry: Slavery and Freedom on the Gulf Coast 1822-1895*. I also attended the Tyrrell Historical Library Association had a meeting of board members on 28 October.

Historic Buildings Photography:

Riverfront Park panoramas: On 24 April 2014, I took a series of photographs that I merged to make two panoramics of the park. After Hurricane Harvey, I made two panoramics to show the damage caused by hurricane. The park had been closed since the hurricane, and much work was done to bring the park to a like new condition. On 9 March 2025 (before the park was officially reopened), I made another panoramic that showed the improvements in the park. After Riverfront Park was officially reopened, I took a final panoramic showing the final look of the park. (Photographs are circulating.)

On 22 October, I got permission to photograph inside the Gilbert Building. The new owners are preparing for the renovation but first must complete demolition of fire damaged components. (Circulating are photographs of the building.)

Kate Hambright informed me that the building that housed the Beaumont Club was being demolished on Orleans Street. It was a building that I had photographed 23 October 2013. This was the last remaining Langham Building (#2) on the corner of Orleans and Fannin. On 18 October, I took a photo of the now vacant lot at that location and created a then-and-now comparison. Langham Building #1 was at the corner of Pearl and Bowie and was at one time a J.C. Penney store. Using an image from the Tyrrell Library and a photo that I took on 24 February 2013, I made a then-and-now comparison. The J.B. Langham Estate Building #3 at the corner of Pearl and College was shown in the SPARE 1989. Using the SPARE image and a photograph that I took on 29 July 2017, I made a then-and-now comparison. (Photographs are circulating.)

I saw a Facebook video on 27 October, showing a house fire on Second Street. I knew that there were some buildings on Second Street in one of the SPARE Beaumont projects. After checking SPARE 1990, I found that the house at 548 Second Street was the structure that burned. Checking my then-and-now comparisons, I saw that I had photographed the house on 6 May 2023. On 28 October, I took several images of the damaged house and made a new then-and-now comparison. Checking the Google Earth image of the area, it reveals that Fire Station #7 is only a stone's throw from the house. I took a series of photos showing the house and the yard of the house. I do not know but suspect that the house was vacant. (Photographs are circulating.)

On 12 November I photographed two murals that I had just found out about, one on Calder from 2023 and one on Seventh Street. (Photographs are circulating.)

There are at least six postcards featuring Lover's Lane located near the Hotel Dieu hospital. I knew that I had seen the name on a Sanborn map but couldn't find it until Kate Hambright told me it was on the 1911 map. On three of the postcards is a white rickety bridge which I was familiar with since it was one of the photographs that I had scanned from Energy Museum showed that structure. (Images of five of the postcards, the Energy Museum photo, and the 1911 Sanborn map are circulating.)

I am not currently photographing any HUD houses.

I visited with David Cargill on 6 July 2020 and talked to him about a mural that he had painted in the Black Cat Restaurant in the Hotel Beaumont. When I photographed the interior of the Hotel Beaumont, the mural had been painted over. He showed me some watercolors done by his wife that may have been the basis of the mural. He also said that he might have negatives that he used for the mural but did not know where they might be. Keith Carter was a good friend of Mr. Cargill, and he would visit with him every Sunday. I asked Keith if he could facilitate the finding of those negatives on several occasions. On the 14 November, Keith spoke at the Art Museum at 500 Main Street. I asked him if there had been any progress since the passing of David Cargill. Keith said that he has no direct contact with the family but that they are aware of the negatives. [\(Photographs of the watercolors and sculptures are circulating.\)](#)

I am still planning to gather all the photographs that I have of sculptures by David Cargill and photograph ones that I have not done yet. These will be donated to the Tyrrell Library.

And finally, the historical marker dedication of the George O'Brien Millard statue was on 2 May 2025. The pedestal for the statue was located in Pipkin Patriots Park and since the marker dedication, it has been reunited with the statue. [\(Photographs are circulating.\)](#)

Steve Lewis

New Marker Filings – by Kate Hambright

The draft inscriptions for the **Matchett Herring Coe, Patillo v. State** and **Beaumont Race Riot** markers have all been approved by the marker sponsors and are working their way through final internal approval at the THC and/or are now on their way to the foundry for casting. The JCHC sponsored the Coe application in house and the marker fee has been paid. The Patillo v. State and Beaumont Race Riot applications were approved as undertold markers. With luck we may receive some or all in late 2026.

The fee for the recently approved **Jefferson County Courthouse RTHL marker** was also paid and hopefully we will receive that marker in 2026.

The HTC medallion and name plate for **Nona Cemetery** has been ordered. This is our third HTC filing in the Pear Orchard community. Look for a dedication in 2026.

The JCHC just filed an undertold marker application for the **Blanchette Settlement** during this fall's undertold marker cycle, which opened October 1. Originally centering on Nona Cemetery, the story grew a bit and focuses more on the Blanchette and Hebert families and their impact on the Pear Orchard community. More details later. Fingers crossed as this is a highly competitive program and only 15 marker topics from about 100+ statewide applications are approved each year.

We have just received word from the THC that the Historic Texas Cemetery designation for Hillebrandt Cemetery, filed by a private marker sponsor with an assist by the JCHC, is complete.

The THC is now processing the Historic Texas Cemetery application for French Family Cemetery filed this summer. Hopefully it will be complete by the end of the year or in January.

The JCHC has submitted recently submitted several DOE's to the THC in anticipation of moving forward with National Register nominations. La Maison Beausoleil in Port Neches Riverfront Park is not definitely ineligible, but the THC advises a nomination for the structure would be difficult as the home was moved from its original location in Louisiana. Therefore, the THC does not recommend pursuing a nomination at this time. The City of Port Neches has been so advised. (As a side note, the City of Port Neches anticipates clarifying its ownership of the home, located in their city park, by the end of the year. Some groups have also expressed potential interest in helping with restoration efforts.) The Port Neches Jail has been deemed eligible for a National Register nomination. The JCHC also recently filed Determinations of Eligibility with the THC for the Cheek Rice Dryer and the Dutch Windmill Museum in Nederland and we are still awaiting comments from the THC. Thanks to Theresa Goodness for writing the Port Neches City Jail and Cheek Rice Dryer DOEs and to William Gray for his work on the Dutch Windmill Museum DOE.

The JCHC is considering three potential new Historic Texas Cemetery filings that will be discussed today for Martha Mack and Sheffield Cemeteries and Town Grave Yard. To that end, we have been collecting/reviewing research materials, writing narratives and assembling data for their proposed applications. We also continued/finalized research on the Happ "Graveyard" and completed a narrative on those findings; the cemetery did not exist.

Report on Status of Current Marker Installations/Applications/Dedications

A lovely marker dedication for Sprott Hospital was held Saturday, September 27, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. on the hospital grounds at 2390 Cartwright, sponsored by the Sprott family. The event was very well attended, including by members of the THC. Leslie Wolfenden is now working on a National Register nomination for the hospital.

The Beaumont Heritage Society graciously hosted a marker dedication ceremony for our Pandit Mehar Chand historical marker, Jefferson County's first undertold marker topic approved by the THC, at 10:00 a.m. on

Saturday, November 15 at the corner of Crockett and Archie Streets. That location is the site of Chand's former store in the 1920s. Marker sponsor Danny Chand and his wife, Vanessa, were in attendance from Ohio along with other family members from around the country and southeast Texas. Danny gave a wonderful speech as did Demi Engman. Mayor West was also in attendance and was so struck by P.M. Chand's story that he expressed an intent to give the Chand family a key to the city. Danny Chand had this say after his return to Ohio: "Vanessa and I arrived home late last night after more than 20 hours of driving. 100% worth it! I saw people – including my father – literally crying because they were so happy and proud of this marker. I've been publishing research and teaching for more than a decade, but I honestly cannot think of a single professional accomplishment that matched how happy I was this Saturday."

Also, I saw this shared post on Facebook from Joe Evans, Jr.: "This morning was something special. I joined the Beaumont Heritage Society as we honored Pandit Mehar "P.M." Chand with a well deserved historical marker. Mr. Chand's story is a powerful reminder of the courage it takes to build a life in a new country, facing rejection, injustice, and barriers that would have broken most people. But he stayed, he served, he built a business, raised a family, and became part of the fabric of Beaumont. Events like this remind us that immigrants helped shape our city's soul, and that the fight for dignity and humanity is never done. Proud to honor a true Beaumont pioneer today."

A beautiful marker dedication for Blanchette Cemetery's HTC marker was also held on Saturday, November 15, 2025. Sponsored by Historic Sacred Spaces, this event was held at 1:00 p.m. on the cemetery grounds at the corner of Inca and Ollie Streets in the Pear Orchard neighborhood with dozens in attendance. The event focused on the contributions of our military and the importance of education. Commissioner Bo Alfred also gave some remarks. Land was first sold on this site by Zeke Janes to the County in 1910 for indigent burials. Charles H.D. Fleming of Fraternal Undertaking Company next established his Fleming Cemetery on the same site prior to forming the "Blanchette Cemetery Association" and formally dedicating the burying grounds as the "Blanchette Cemetery" in 1935.

The Magnolia Cemetery HTC medallion and name plate, received on May 6, has not yet been installed due to City of Beaumont water utilities/construction projects along Pine Street.

Death Certificates for Enslaved Individuals Interred in Beaumont Cemeteries

As a special project that originated with Martha Mack Cemetery, I have started to collect the death certificates for formerly enslaved individuals buried at our various Black Beaumont cemeteries, and to date have located over 530 certificates plus a few obituaries and other names that have cropped up in my research that have been corroborated through probate or legal records. The list can never be complete due to private burials not reported to the county, pre-1903 deaths (when the keeping of death records was standardized in Texas), cemetery creation dates and so forth. Likewise, Jefferson County death certificates for the period 1903-1910 are not available online. However, it serves as a good starting point for the collection of this data. For some, there is little known information other than the most basic of facts. For many mostly forgotten souls interred without grave markers, their names are only memorialized through these records. The certificates should prove useful for demographic study. The only cemetery I have not addressed to date is Lincoln Park.

Here are my totals:

North end (Pine/Gill Street areas)

Anthony – 91
Blanchette No. 2 – 3
Evergreen - 161
Martha Mack - 37

Robinson (next to Dan Gill Grave Yard) – 28
Piney Woods – 8
Sheffield - 2
Simmons - 25

Pear Orchard Neighborhood:

County Cemetery (occupied a portion of Blanchette Cemetery grounds in 1910s) - 4
Blessed Sacrament Catholic Cemetery – 25
Pear Orchard Cemetery - 1
Nona Cemetery – 96 and Blanchette – 61

Of the last two cemeteries, there a bit of fluidity between where burials occurred between the two cemeteries per death certificate information and the number of those interred at Nona should really be higher and at Blanchette less. If anyone really desires an explanation as to why this fluidity exists, I will be happy to give it after the meeting.

Melody Maids

Earlier this summer I was honored to write a narrative for the Eloise Rush Milam Presidential Medal of Freedom application. Roxanne Babin advises that the paperwork is now “in the pipeline” in Washington. She hopes to add the new Melody Maids movie that just premiered in Round Rock on Nov. 8 to her application packet.

Potential New Marker Requests

Don Smart is interested in filing a subject marker application for the French Independent School District in the spring and is busily collecting all kinds of interesting data for his narrative.

Katherine Leister is interested in filing a subject marker application for Florence Stratton in the spring. This is excellent news as I sent Paul Prosperie marker information back in 2023.

Bobby Parham has reached out about filing a RTHL marker for the former Neva’s Café at 11325 Old Voth Road, where Starday Records and Starlight Publishing Company were founded in 1953 by Jack and Neva Starnes and George Jones recorded his first songs. Neva Starnes first opened the café in 1943. Today the property is known as the Soggy Bottom Saloon.

We still hope to file a Historical Texas Cemetery designation application for Blessed Sacrament Cemetery, a/k/a Haven of Rest, in the Pear Orchard neighborhood and believe that there may now be increasing likelihood for the Diocese to consider the idea favorably following the positive interest generated by the Agatha Babino exhibit. We shall wait and see.

John Alexander of the Globber Building, 1089 Magnolia, has reached out about a possible RTHL application for his building during next year’s filing period.

Connie Dickerson has reached out about a possible RTHL application for her home, the former Capt. H. M. Fredericksen residence located at 2849 Fourth Street in Port Arthur.

NRHP Nomination

The Temple to the Brave National Register nomination, which was approved by the THC at its State Board of Review meeting in Galveston over a year ago on January 13, 2024, has stalled. The THC contends that it cannot file same during the federal government shutdown.

Marker Relocation Updates

Site of Old Aurora: This marker remains in storage in Commissioner Sinegal's Pct. 3 warehouse for the duration of an anticipated six months-long improvement project along Woodworth Boulevard between Procter Street and Lakeshore Drive. The City of Port Arthur is aware of this project. They have not responded to queries for updates on this project.

Presbyterian Church of the Covenant (now known as Providence Church of Southeast Texas): This marker will remain in storage at the Precinct 2 Service Center until such time as the church locates a permanent new home.

Miscellaneous Marker Matters

The damaged Port Arthur Refinery Marker near the Valero plant on Highway 87 is still currently in storage at the Pct. 3 warehouse pending its reinstallation. We first plan to refinish the marker at the warehouse once the temperatures cool down sufficiently.

Valero reached out to the THC about potentially helping to replace the Spindletop to Port Arthur Oil Pipeline Corridor historical marker, which has been missing since at least 2018. The THC informed the company of the cost of a replacement marker (\$2,500). Having heard no word from the plant on if they wished to proceed, I reached out. No response.

Planning staff recommended denial of this request as it seems inconsistent with the architectural style of the home.

Slides of the subject property, proposed placement & color selection of stucco, and surrounding area were shown.

Brief discussion followed concerning specifics of the request.

The applicant was present. Joseph Gonzalez, 2628 McFaddin Street, Beaumont, Texas addressed the Commission. He stated that water damaged the wall where the concrete plaster was removed and the lower section of the wall will be replaced. Mr. Gonzalez further stated that he did not obtain the proper permits prior to removing the concrete plaster and would like to replace it with board and batten siding as stucco is not cost effective. He also stated that he purchases and revives older properties in Beaumont and has owned this currently occupied rental property since 2008.

Further discussion followed concerning the existing concrete plaster on the home; possible replacement with synthetic stucco, concrete plaster, or Hardie Plank board; and, the proposed replacement with board and batten siding.

Commissioner Berube moved to deny the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to change the façade of a house, as requested in PZ2025-235.

Commissioner Makin seconded the motion.

The Commission approved of Staff consideration for the installation of synthetic stucco or real stucco made to resemble the remainder of the home.

Further discussion followed concerning previous failed attempts to repair the area with concrete plaster and the proper procedure for replacing stucco.

A roll call vote was taken. Chairman LaBiche-Aye; Commissioner Bell-Aye; Commissioner Berube-Aye; Commissioner Crawford-Aye; Commissioner Hambright-Aye; Commissioner Kelley-Aye; Commissioner Makin-Aye; Commissioner Morian-Aye; Commissioner Provo-Aye; Commissioner Thomas-Aye. The motion to deny the request carried 10:0.

2) **PZ2025-249**: A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow an accessory building.

Applicant: Jacobee Robertson
Location: 2505 Louisiana Street

Mrs. Luckey presented the staff report. Jacobee Robertson, is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow an accessory building in the rear yard of the property located at 2505 Louisiana Street. The accessory building will be visible from the street right-of-way. This request comes after the storage building was already placed on the property without the benefit of an approved Certificate of Appropriateness or building permits.

The structure is made of wood with vertical panels, the body of the structure is a deep brown color and the trim is white.

This home is not in the SPARE Beaumont Survey.

Planning staff recommended approval of this request with the following conditions:

1. All applicable permits are obtained through the Building Codes Department.

2. The storage building shall not encroach into the 5' utility easement along the rear property line and must be in conformance with Section 29.03.024 District area and height regulations of our City's Ordinance.
3. The accessory building be painted to match the main structure.

Slides of the subject property and surrounding area were shown. The accessory building was relocated after the original photographs were taken.

Brief discussion followed concerning location of the accessory buildings located on the property and the number of accessory buildings allowed.

The applicant was present. Jacobee Robertson, 2505 Louisiana Street, Beaumont, Texas addressed the Commission. He stated that he was unaware of the permitting process. Mr. Robertson further stated that the building is necessary to secure his personal property as theft has been an issue in the past. The applicant approved of the conditions recommended by Staff.

Further discussion followed concerning specifics of the paint color requirements.

Commissioner Makin moved to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow an accessory building, as requested in PZ2025-249, with the following conditions:

1. All applicable permits are obtained through the Building Codes Department.
2. The storage building shall not encroach into the 5' utility easement along the rear property line and must be in conformance with Section 29.03.024 District area and height regulations of our City's Ordinance.
3. The accessory building be painted to match the main structure.

Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Chairman LaBiche-Aye; Commissioner Bell-Aye; Commissioner Berube-Aye; Commissioner Crawford-Aye; Commissioner Hambright-Aye; Commissioner Kelley-Aye; Commissioner Makin-Aye; Commissioner Morian-Aye; Commissioner Provo-Aye; Commissioner Thomas-Aye. The motion to approve the request carried 10:0.

HISTORIC DISTRICT CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Ms. Luckey presented the Historic District Code Enforcement Report for the month of July 2025, including information about current violations and inspections.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:58 PM.

MARTHA MACK CEMETERY by Kate Hambright

Martha McFadden (aka “Martha Mack”), an enslaved Black woman, was born in Arkansas in approximately 1846. The circumstances of her arrival in Jefferson County and subsequent emancipation are unknown, but by at least 1870 she was employed as a laundress in Beaumont, working for the William McFaddin family.¹ Martha Mack became romantically involved with Henry E. Simpson, a White, widowed English cabinetmaker, and had a daughter, Roxie Ann Simpson Alexander Harris Patillo (b. 2/15/1873 - 2/15/1961). Some years later the couple had a second daughter, Barsheba (aka Dossy, Boshie, Boshaba) Simpson Desso Wilson Plummer (b. 3/9/1883 - d. 9/10/1955).² Martha already had three daughters from a previous relationship, Harriett, Louanna and Eliza McFaddin, and she subsequently gave birth to another child, Dallas McFaddin, following the birth of Barsheba.³ The father, or fathers, of these four additional children is unknown.

On January 26, 1881 William McFaddin conveyed one acre of land to Martha Mack out of the James Drake Survey for the sum of \$50.00.⁴ The property was bounded on the north by land belonging to Anderson Sheffield,⁵ the south by land belonging to Frank Happ, the east by Brakes Bayou, and the west by the public road from “Beaumont to Colliers Ferry” (later known as Pine Street). Following an unfortunate incident leading to Martha Mack’s conviction for assault on May 16, 1885,⁶ Martha Mack sold this same one acre to A. J. Shotwell on May 18, 1885. Shotwell in turn sold the acre to the City of Beaumont, on July 28, 1885.⁷

In 1901, Martha Mack’s daughter Roxie Patillo filed suit in Jefferson County District Court against the City of Beaumont in Cause No. 2991, stating that the City had unlawfully ejected her from the Martha Mack Cemetery, to which she claimed ownership. In a judgment entered August 26, 1901⁸ Roxie Patillo was awarded the one-acre tract as her sole and separate property. In a City of Beaumont Auditor’s Report for the Quarter Ending June 30, 1920, however, the municipality continued to list the Martha Mack Cemetery as an asset, an error on the part of its Auditing Department.⁹ Furthermore, the city’s inventory list noted that the Martha Mack Cemetery was “60 x 152 foot” in size and contained 56 lots – incorrectly reducing the one-acre tract to one-tenth of an acre.

While the total number of burials on the property has not been ascertained, at least 37 formerly enslaved individuals were interred at Martha Mack Cemetery between 1905 and 1922. There were numerous other individuals also buried on the grounds who were born following the close of the Civil War.¹⁰ Grave markers, if any, are no longer extant on this property,¹¹ or in many instances were most likely never installed at all due to

¹ Martha McFaddin: 1880 U.S. Federal Censuses, Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas, ancestry.com. William McFaddin was a prominent White cattleman and pioneer who was also involved in numerous real estate transactions throughout Jefferson County.

² Roxie Ann Simpson Patillo and Basheba Simpson Plummer: Texas, U.S., Death Certificates, 1903-1982. See also Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 112, pg. 374

³ Martha McFaddin: 1870, 1880 U.S. Federal Censuses, Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas, ancestry.com.

⁴ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. U, pg. 304. No deeds to this property officially refer to the tract as the “Martha Mack Cemetery” or the “cemetery”. However, its use as a burial site for human remains has been well documented through multiple death certificates, obituaries printed in the *Beaumont Enterprise and Journal*, scholarly articles, Beaumont City Directories, a Sanborn map and other anecdotal accounts. See Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 8, Subtitle C, Chapter 711, Subchapter A, Section 711.035 for effect of dedication, www.statutes.capital.texas.gov

⁵ Including the Sheffield Cemetery, family burial ground that is today (2025) owned by the City of Beaumont. Anderson Sheffield, aka Anderson Marble, was also sometimes called “Andrew” Sheffield.

⁶ Martha Mack assaulted an individual who had attempted to levy a writ of execution upon a piano. The *Galveston Daily News*, July 4, 1885, pg. 5. A series of subsequent hardships then befell Martha Mack in her later years. She appears to have died on or before 1909 (Affidavit of Roxie Patillo, wherein she refers to her mother in the past tense. Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 112, pg. 374)

⁷ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. X, pg. 561; Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. X, pg. 564. Consideration for each of these conveyances was \$50.00.

⁸ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 51, pg. 384. See also Case No. 2991, Jefferson County District Court Records. Judgment recorded in Vol. 2, pg. 584

⁹ “City of Beaumont Auditor’s Report,” *Beaumont Journal*, September 1, 1920, pg. 11

¹⁰ Texas, U.S., Death Certificates, 1903-1982, ancestry.com. Note 1: Jefferson County death certificates for 1903-1909 are unavailable for research online. All burials in this cemetery ceased by 1923.

Note 2: For purposes of this report, data was collected on enslaved individuals only interred at Martha Mack Cemetery.

¹¹ Most likely consisting of wood, small rocks or stones, or flat markers.

the unfortunate socio-economic circumstances of the decedents buried here. Information that is available for individuals interred at the cemetery was obtained through death certificates and more rarely through obituaries discovered in local newspapers.

Perhaps the most well recognized freedman to be interred at Martha Mack Cemetery was Rev. Woodson Gill Pipkin. Rev. Pipkin was a well-respected early Black educator and minister who established Beaumont's first two Black schools. He also assisted in founding the city's first Black Methodist Episcopal church and subsequently became its pastor. Additional information may be found about Rev. Pipkin here:

<https://www.sfasu.edu/heritagecenter/9619.asp>

Rev. Pipkin's enslaver during the Civil War was Rev. John F. Pipkin, a local Beaumont pioneer and minister from whom he had acquired a considerable education. Woodson Gill Pipkin assisted Rev. John Pipkin with burials of Federal soldiers at the now long abandoned Town Grave Yard, later site of the Kansas City Southern Depot, bounded by Washington, Trinity, College and Jefferson.¹²

Rev. Woodson Gill Pipkin was additionally the brother of Kansas (aka Arkansas) Gill, who married Anderson Sheffield.¹³ The Sheffield Addition to the City of Beaumont, including the Sheffield Cemetery, a family burial ground, bounds the Martha Mack Cemetery on its north side. Rev. Pipkin was also at one time the guardian of Martha Mack's two daughters with Henry E. Simpson, Roxie and Barsheba Simpson.¹⁴

On May 8, 1908, Rev. Pipkin addressed the Beaumont City Council with a notice he had received from "Roxy" Patillo to cease burials in the Martha Mack cemetery. Roxie Patillo, as owner of the cemetery, felt she was entitled to collect rent. The Council refrained from acting in the matter and advised Rev. Pipkin to obtain his own counsel.¹⁵ There is no evidence that Roxie Patillo moved forward with a lawsuit, however, and ultimately Rev. Pipkin was himself buried in Martha Mack Cemetery on May 17, 1918.

A 1911 Sanborn map of Beaumont¹⁶ reflects the "Martha Mack Cemetery Negro" tract occupying the space between the Sheffield Addition to its north, Happ Addition to its south and Collier's Ferry Road to its west. The eastern end of the property bounded by Brakes Bayou is not displayed in this close up image.

The 1913 Official Map of Beaumont¹⁷ shows the "Jack Patillo" one-acre tract occupying the area between the Sheffield Addition to its north, Happ Addition to its south, Collier's Ferry Road to its west and Brakes Bayou to its east. Jack Patillo was the husband of Roxie Patillo, the owner of the property and the Martha Mack Cemetery.

Burials at this cemetery ceased by 1923.

On June 21, 1926, Roxie Patillo, joined by her husband Jack Patillo, sold the one-acre tract containing the Martha Mack Cemetery to the Neches Lumber & Building Company,¹⁸ which owned the property continuously until conveying same to the City of Beaumont on August 24, 1945.¹⁹

In this same 1945 deed, the Neches Lumber & Building Company also conveyed numerous lots in the Sheffield

¹² *Beaumont Journal*, March 5, 1916, pg. 8. See also Linsley, Judy. "Mysteries of the Battle of Sabine Pass," January 2021, SFASU

¹³ Woodson Pipkin: Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982 (lists father as James Gill). See also Affidavit of Woodson Pipkin, Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 100, pg. 635 (wherein he identifies Kansas Sheffield as his sister).

"Kinsas" (Kansas) Pipkin: 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas, ancestry.com

The death certificates of Anderson Sheffield and Minor Sheffield, sons of Anderson and Arkansas Sheffield, lists their mother's maiden name as "Arkansas Pipkin." The death certificate of Emerson Sheffield, son of Anderson and Arkansas Sheffield, lists his mother's maiden name as "Arkansas Gill." Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982, ancestry.com

¹⁴ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 112, pg. 374

¹⁵ *Beaumont Journal*, May 9, 1908, pg. 2; *Beaumont Enterprise*, May 9, 1908, pg. 7

¹⁶ Sanborn Map, Beaumont, 1911, Pg. 93, Dolph Briscoe Library, University of Texas

¹⁷ 1913 Official Map of Beaumont Jefferson Co. Tex., April 1913, Oscar O. Seward, City Engineer. Private collection of Kate Hambright, Jefferson County Historical Commission Marker Chair.

¹⁸ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 271, pg. 114

¹⁹ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 575, pg. 494

addition immediately to the north of the Martha Mack Cemetery, including the tract whereupon the Sheffield Cemetery is located, and most of the Happ Addition immediately to the south of the Martha Mack Cemetery, which included Happ Avenue (a short, unpaved road turning east off of Pine Street and cutting through the middle of the Happ Addition), to the City of Beaumont. During its own ownership of these lands the Neches Lumber & Building Company used the Martha Mack Cemetery as well as lots in the Sheffield and Happ Additions adjacent to Brakes Bayou as a lumberyard, storing large, heavy stacks of lumber on this land for many years.²⁰

A previously unsubstantiated account states that the bodies from Martha Mack Cemetery might have been moved to Evergreen Cemetery by the City of Beaumont at an unspecified date. However, multiple efforts on the part of numerous researchers have to date failed to verify this information. Following the cemetery's disuse as a burial place by 1923, the property was sold by the cemetery owner to a third party (Neches Lumber) and immediately turned into a lumberyard. At the time of the City's acquisition of the property in 1945, any evidence of previously visible graves would therefore have long disappeared, making their removal difficult, if not in fact impossible.

The Beaumont Boat Club, Inc. was organized at the end of 1957 and the club's Southwell Landing was established on the Neches River in 1958, near the city dump. A map and instructions to the club's marina as printed in the *Beaumont Journal* in August 1958²¹ reveal the only access to the marina and city dump at that time was from Pine Street to the marina's south and under the freeway, utilizing a bridge to which Bethlehem Steel Company and the City of Beaumont had shared access by virtue of a perpetual easement for road right-of-way purposes granted to the City by Bethlehem Steel on March 1, 1931 and renewed every 10 years thereafter to allow access to the City's garbage disposal sites.²²

In 1963, the City of Beaumont decided to build its own bridge north of the freeway (at that time called Highway 90) over Brakes Bayou, allowing the City independent access to its city dump and boat club members access into their marina. Following completion of the new bridge, the Bethlehem Steel bridge would be closed to the public and designated for use by the company's employees only. Bethlehem Steel would furnish steel for the new bridge.²³

That same year (1963), the City commenced construction of a new sanitation road parallel to and north of the short, unpaved Happ Avenue that turned east off Pine Street. The new road connected to the new Brakes Bayou bridge then under construction and then continued a little further east before turning south to allow access to the City's garbage sites as well as the boat marina.²⁴ City garbage was used as the base to build this new road across the marsh to the dump. The new road opened to traffic on December 8, 1963.²⁵ On August 29, 1967, the Beaumont City Council voted to close the short Happ Avenue, which provided access to the City's pound pen, as it had been replaced by a new entrance road to the animal shelter from the new sanitation road.²⁶

On September 28, 1982, the Beaumont City Council voted to name the sanitation road leading from Pine Street to the city land fill and the boat club "Brakes Bayou Road" and designate it as a city street, thereby dedicating its easements to the City as well as ensuring responsibility by the City for the road's maintenance.²⁷ Later still, the Beaumont City Council approved a request by the boat club to change the road's name to Marina Drive on December 22, 1987.²⁸

The section of Marina Drive that is located between Pine Street and the Brakes Bayou Bridge is located

²⁰ Jefferson County District Clerk Records, Cause No. 32084. See also Texas Sanborn Map, Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas, 1941, pg. 102. The City continues to own the Sheffield Cemetery and Lots 1 and 2 in Block 4 of the Sheffield Addition in 2025 but previously sold its other previously acquired interests in that addition.

²¹ *Beaumont Journal*, August 22, 1958, pg. 4

²² Beaumont City Council Minutes, April 30, 1963, pg. 1254, Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, Texas

²³ Beaumont City Council Minutes, April 2, 1963, pg. 1238, Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, Texas

²⁴ *Beaumont Enterprise*, December 4, 1963, pg. 21

²⁵ *Beaumont Journal*, May 30, 1962, pg. 3; August 21, 1963, pg. 5; *Beaumont Enterprise*, December 4, 1963, pg. 21

²⁶ *Beaumont Journal*, July 11, 1967, pg. 3 and August 29, 1967, pg. 2

²⁷ *Beaumont Enterprise*, September 29, 1982, pg. 10

²⁸ *Beaumont Enterprise*, December 23, 1987, pg. 18

immediately south of the Sheffield Addition and north of the Happ Addition. The center of the roadway appears to cut through the center of the former Martha Mack Cemetery, no vestiges of which remain visible today.

Anderson Sheffield (aka Anderson Marble), an enslaved Black man, was born ca. 1847 in Mississippi or Alabama. The circumstances of his arrival in Beaumont are unknown, but following his emancipation, he was employed as a farm laborer by at least 1870. He married Kansas (aka Arkansas) Gill on July 23, 1873 and subsequently worked at a local shingle mill.²⁹ Kansas Gill, b. ca. 1858 in Arkansas, was the sister of Rev. Woodson Gill Pipkin and at the age of 12 in 1870 lived in the home of her older brother Woodson and his large family in Beaumont. Rev. Pipkin was a well-respected early Black educator and minister who established Beaumont's first two Black schools. He also assisted in founding the city's first Black Methodist Episcopal church and subsequently became its pastor. Additional information may be found about Rev. Pipkin here:

<https://www.sfasu.edu/heritagecenter/9619.asp>

Rev. Pipkin's enslaver during the Civil War was Rev. John F. Pipkin, a local Beaumont pioneer and minister from whom he had acquired a considerable education. Woodson Gill Pipkin assisted Rev. John Pipkin with burials of Federal soldiers at the now long abandoned Town Grave Yard, later site of the Kansas City Southern Depot, bounded by Washington, Trinity, College and Jefferson.³⁰

Rev. Woodson Pipkin's and Kansas Gill's own father, however, was Joe Gill.³¹ Kansas Gill and Woodson Gill Pipkin had several other siblings, one of whom also settled in Beaumont in the 1870s, Daniel Gill, b. ca. 1850 in Arkansas. Anderson and Kansas Sheffield resided on property adjoining Daniel Gill in 1880. Like his brother-in-law Anderson Sheffield, Daniel Gill was employed in a local shingle mill.³² Daniel Gill additionally owned acreage on the west of side Collier's Ferry Road (now known as Pine Street), including the Dan Gill Grave Yard.

Anderson Sheffield and Kansas Gill Sheffield had ten children, including Lola, Valence, Mattie, Solomon (aka "Cee"), Isiah (aka "Coat"), Bessie, Anderson (aka "Son"), Malchair (aka "Malachi"), Emerson and Minor.³³

Sheffield purchased one acre in the James Drake Survey on the east side of Collier's Ferry Road (now known as Pine Street) from William McFaddin on February 16, 1875.³⁴ He purchased an additional four-acre tract in the James Drake Survey from A. R. McLain on August 5, 1881. The property was bounded by Brakes Bayou on its east side.³⁵ On July 15, 1890, Anderson and Arkansas Sheffield sold a 60 x 120 feet tract of land out of the northwest corner of their property previously purchased from A.R. McLain to the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America.³⁶

Anderson Sheffield died on October 15, 1897.³⁷ His widow, Arkansas Sheffield, dedicated a 45 x 240 feet "Sheffield Cemetery" containing eighteen 20 x 20 feet blocks laid out in two rows of nine blocks each with 5-

²⁹ Anderson Marble: 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Beaumont & Settlement Above, Jefferson County, Texas; Anderson Sheffield: 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Justice Precinct No. 1, Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas; Texas, U.S., Marriage Index, 1824-2021, ancestry.com

³⁰ *Beaumont Journal*, March 5, 1916, pg. 8. See also Linsley, Judy. "Mysteries of the Battle of Sabine Pass," January 2021, SFASU

³¹ Woodson Pipkin: Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982 (lists father as James Gill). See also Affidavit of Woodson Pipkin, Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 100, pg. 635 (wherein he identifies Kansas Sheffield as his sister).

"Kinsas" (Kansas) Pipkin: 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas, ancestry.com

The death certificates of Anderson Sheffield and Minor Sheffield, sons of Anderson and Arkansas Sheffield, lists their mother's maiden name as "Arkansas Pipkin." The death certificate of Emerson Sheffield, son of Anderson and Arkansas Sheffield, lists his mother's maiden name as "Arkansas Gill." Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982, ancestry.com

³² Gill, Daniel 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Justice Precinct No. 1, Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas, ancestry.com

³³ Affidavit of Rufus Fletcher, Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 391, pg. 235; Affidavit of Isiah Sheffield, Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 391, pg. 236

³⁴ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. U, pg. 512 (William McFaddin to Anderson Marble); Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. U, pg. 515. The property

Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 2, pg. 408 (see also Vol. 10, pg. 41)

³⁵ Jefferson County Map Records, Vol. 2, pg. 146

³⁶ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 2, pg. 416. See Also Vol. 3, pg. 88

³⁷ Affidavit of Thomas B. Haynes, M.D., Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 115, pg. 498

foot alleys between each block on July 9, 1898.³⁸ Below the center block in the bottom row (Block 14) of this dedication map is written “Old Cemetery,” which may pinpoint the burial site of family patriarch and Arkansas’s husband Anderson Sheffield, who is buried on the cemetery grounds. The 1898 instrument is silent as to the location of the cemetery on the Sheffield tract. However, a later map partitioning the Sheffield homestead and creating the Sheffield Addition to the City of Beaumont reveals that the cemetery is located on the southern boundary line of the Sheffield Addition.³⁹ Arkansas Sheffield died shortly thereafter and was also interred at the family cemetery.⁴⁰ In Cause No. 32084; *Isiah Sheffield, et al v. Neches Lumber & Building Co. et al*, In the District Court of Jefferson County, Texas,⁴¹ other family members identified as interred on the property include Anderson and Arkansas Sheffield’s sons, Valance, Solomon, Anderson, Malachi and Minor; daughters, Lola Sheffield Rawls, Mattie Sheffield Delaney and Bessie Sheffield Bean; and other “relatives and friends.” The 1929 court case provides the only surviving inventory of individuals interred at this cemetery.⁴²

In a partition of the lots and blocks of the Sheffield Addition amongst the various heirs in Cause 3350; *Ike Delany v. M. W. Lowery*, in the 58th District Court of Jefferson County entered in October 1900,⁴³ it was noted that “No attempt was made to partition the cemetery, it seeming to be the desire of the heirs to let it stand, and with such difficulties as the commitment, it will have to remain as it is.” With interments having already occurred on the burial grounds, significant legal obstacles would make a division of the property significantly more challenging, if not impossible.

The 1913 Official Map of Beaumont⁴⁴ shows the Sheffield cemetery tract (labeled “cemetery”) occupying the southern portion of parts Blocks 3 and 4 and an alleyway of the Sheffield Addition and touching upon the “Jack Patillo” one-acre tract to its south, a Black cemetery. Jack Patillo was the husband of Roxie Patillo, the owner of the property and cemetery (“Martha Mack Cemetery”).

In 1929, Sheffield heirs brought suit against Neches Lumber & Building Company and several other defendants for various damages, including trespass.⁴⁵ Specifically, with regard to the cemetery, plaintiffs alleged defendant Tollie Rouett “maliciously, wantonly and designedly entered into the possession” of the cemetery in which were buried their ancestors and other relatives and friends, and which was fenced and set apart, and

“maliciously demolished the tombstones and other marks and burial spots in said cemetery and dug up the bones of the some of the people buried there and desecrated and annihilated every sign and vestige of a grave therein and converted said cemetery into a hog and chicken yard and otherwise converted it to his own use and benefit and are still perpetrating these acts and been doing the same for more than two years without the consent of the plaintiffs, unlawfully ejecting plaintiffs therefrom and still unlawfully withholding the same from them . . . and and by reason of such outrageous acts and trespasses inflicted upon them they are suffering mental pain and anguish in the way of shame, degradation, and humiliation . . .”

In a Judgment rendered March 29, 1929, Judge George C. O’Brien awarded a portion of the Sheffield Addition to Defendant Neches Lumber & Building Company, including the Sheffield Cemetery tract.⁴⁶

³⁸ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 24, pg. 1

³⁹ Jefferson County Map Records, Vol. 2, pg. 146; dated August 22, 1910. See also City Engineer Oscar A. Seward: 1913 Official Map of Beaumont.

⁴⁰ Multiple family trees report Arkansas Sheffield’s death date as July 9, 1898 on ancestry.com. She was in fact deceased by 1900 per a partition of the real property among the heirs found in Cause No. 3350, 58th District Court, Jefferson County District Court Records.

⁴¹ Jefferson County District Court Records.

⁴² No Texas death certificates can be located for burials in this family cemetery.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ 1913 Official Map of Beaumont Jefferson Co. Tex., April 1913, Oscar O. Seward, City Engineer. Private collection of Kate Hambright, Jefferson County Historical Commission Marker Chair.

⁴⁵ Cause No. 32084; *Isiah Sheffield, et al v. Neches Lumber & Building Co. et al*, In the District Court of Jefferson County, Texas. Plaintiffs’ Second Amended Original Petition: Jefferson County District Court Records

⁴⁶ Judgment, Cause No. 32084A. Ibid.

On August 24, 1945, Neches Lumber & Building Company deeded all of its interest in the Sheffield Addition to the City of Beaumont, including the cemetery.⁴⁷ Following an enumeration of the various lots and blocks in the Sheffield Addition being conveyed in the deed, the company provided the following description of the Sheffield Cemetery tract:

Tract abutting Lot 6, Block 3, on the East, Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4, Block 4, on the North, Lot 4, Block 4, on the West, of the Sheffield Addition to the City of Beaumont, and abutting the Happ addition to the City of Beaumont on the South.

This same deed also conveys the Martha Mack one acre (a Black cemetery), lying south of the Sheffield Addition and north of the Happ Addition, and most of the Happ Addition, which lay south of the Martha Mack cemetery, to the City of Beaumont. It is apparent the deed contains an error in describing the Sheffield Cemetery tract as “abutting the Happ addition to the City of Beaumont on the South.”

The City of Beaumont continues to own the Sheffield Cemetery tract and Lots 1 and 2 in Block 4 in the Sheffield Addition to the City of Beaumont in 2025.⁴⁸ Notably the legal description for the property owned by the city, JCAD Parcel No. 101124, is “SHEFFIELD LT 1 LT 2 B4,” which omits any reference to the exempt cemetery tract. However, Jefferson County Appraisal District’s GIS map reveals the Sheffield Cemetery tract is fact included in this parcel. The wooded tract is located just north of present-day Marina Drive and is located approximately just to the east of a center point between Pine Street to its west and Brakes Bayou to its east. It is unknown if any grave markers are still visible (2025) on the cemetery grounds.

Mildred S. Wright’s 1981 “Jefferson County, Texas Cemeteries” describes a former cemetery, named Maple Grove,⁴⁹ that appears to be Sheffield Cemetery.

⁴⁷ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 575, pg. 494

⁴⁸ JCAD Parcel No. 101124. For reference, see also Sheffield Addition to the City of Beaumont, Jefferson County Map Records, Vol. 2, pg. 146; dated August 22, 1910.

⁴⁹ Wright, Mildred S. “Jefferson County Cemeteries, Part 3,” Mildred Sulser Wright, C.G.R.S. Beaumont, Texas, 1981, pg. 79.

TOWN GRAVE YARD by Kate Hambright

A long forgotten cemetery lies quietly under the former early 20th century site of the Kansas City Southern Depot in downtown Beaumont. Later still, Beaumont Fire Station No. 1 occupied the same block as the former cemetery at the corner of College and Trinity Streets. Block 64 of the original Town of Beaumont is bounded by Washington (Gilbert) to its south, Trinity to its east, College to its north and Jefferson to its west. The burial site marks the final resting site of both Federal and Confederate soldiers who perished during the Civil War, and others treated, unsuccessfully, at Beaumont's nearby Jefferson County Courthouse-turned-war relief hospital at Pearl, Franklin and Milam Streets, commencing in 1863.⁴⁹

In 1916, Rev. Woodson Pipkin, a well-respected Black educator and preacher⁴⁹ who was formerly enslaved to local minister Rev. John Fletcher Pipkin, recalled regularly attending Rev. John Pipkin to bury deceased soldiers in this cemetery during the war, in particular Federal soldiers of the memorable September 8, 1863 Battle of Sabine Pass.⁴⁹ An eye witness to these events, he believed several hundred soldiers were ultimately buried at this location. Other accounts, unsubstantiated, place this figure anywhere between two hundred and five hundred soldiers.⁴⁹

In 1925 author Florence Stratton interviewed Rev. John Pipkin's son, City Alderman Steve W. Pipkin, about his own recollections of this turbulent period.⁴⁹ Of their conversation she says, in part,

Roar of cannon at the battle of Sabine Pass still sound in the ears of Steve W. Pipkin, who as a little child accompanied his father, Rev. John Fletcher Pipkin, pioneer Methodist minister, in his visits of mercy to the wounded brought here from Sabine Pass. And seeing a fourteen-year-old boy with his leg shot off, indelibly impressed upon the Beaumont child the cruelty of war.

Following damage sustained by the U.S.S. *Clifton* and U.S.S. *Sachem* from cannon fire by Lt. Richard "Dick" W. Dowling and his troops at Fort Griffin on September 8, 1863, the C.S.S. *Uncle Ben* towed the disabled Federal steamers ashore. Approximately 28 Federal casualties were immediately buried at Sabine Pass, in a long trench; their remains were later rediscovered in the 20th century.⁴⁹ Wounded Federal soldiers and officers, including Lt. Robert Rhodes, U.S.N., acting master and Executive Officer of the *Clifton*, were transported to Beaumont for treatment at its relief hospital aboard the *Uncle Ben* in the care of Acting Assistant Surgeon D. D. T. Nestell, U.S.N. Federal prisoners were sent immediately to Houston, causing a delay for federal officials to attempt to obtain the names of those missing, killed or wounded in action. At last, in a letter to Commodore H. H. Bell, Commanding the Western Gulf Squadron off New Orleans, La. on November 9, 1863, Acting Volunteer Lt. Federick Crocker, U.S. Navy reported "as near as he was able to ascertain" that in addition to multiple men still known to be missing (28, *Clifton* and 13, *Sachem*) from both vessels at that time, 10 were killed and 9 wounded on the *Clifton* and 7 killed on the *Sachem*.⁴⁹

Federal wounded officers and soldiers were reportedly treated courteously at Beaumont's temporary Courthouse hospital during the Civil War.⁴⁹ It is unknown how many of the relatively small number from the Battle of Sabine Pass may have perished and were subsequently buried in the Town Grave Yard, although Lt. Robert Rhodes, U.S.N.'s wounds proved mortal. He died on September 10, 1868 and was subsequently buried with military honors and "one company of rebels acting as escort" in the Beaumont cemetery.⁴⁹ In 1868 Lt. Rhodes' remains at this site were positively identified by his brother, Frank Clinton Rhodes, and his body was removed for reinterment at Grace Church Cemetery at Providence, Rhode Island. Frank Clinton Rhodes was shown the graves of the Battle of Sabine Pass Federal war dead at the Town Grave Yard by a Mr. Gray, where Rhodes opened and examined each grave in search of his brother. Mr. Gray's family lived near the Jefferson County Courthouse and recalled bringing items to Lt. Robert Rhodes in its wartime hospital in 1863, prior to his death.⁴⁹

By 1901, although Civil War veteran Capt. George W. O'Brien and Mrs. Sam Watson of the local Daughters of the Confederacy had been consulted for their opinions, it was impossible to determine in what particular battles all of the remaining soldiers interred on the cemetery's grounds had perished.⁴⁹ A portion of these deaths can be attributed to yellow fever and other diseases and non-combat causes.

Block 64 was the property of Thomas B. Huling, Joseph P. Pulsifer and Henry Millard, three of the Town of Beaumont's founders. News reporters almost half a century after the war surmised that these founders gave the land as a public cemetery.⁴⁹ No deed or other record corroborates its official donation for such a purpose. More than likely, however, they were only too pleased to offer the use of the land, even if only informally, as an emergency burial site.

In 1903, Beaumont's then Mayor Thomas Langham recalled burials at this location as far back as 1857. Interments, which may have some Black individuals and local citizens, had ceased by about 1869 or 1870.^{49,49}

In a deed dated November 11, 1838,⁴⁹ the various partners in the new Town of Beaumont (including the representatives of the Estate of Noah Tevis, including Nancy Hutchinson, Administrator of the Estate of Noah Tevis Dec'd and widow of said Noah Tevis, George Washington Tevis and Gilbert Stephenson, Commissioner appointed by the Probate of Jefferson County; Joseph P. Pulsifer, Henry Millard and Thomas B. Huling of the firm of Joseph P. Pulsifer & Co.; and Joseph Grisby) partitioned its various lots and blocks between the parties. On page 4 of this indenture agreement, co-partners Joseph P. Pulsifer, Henry Millard and Thomas B. Huling were awarded the town's Block 64.⁴⁹ The block consisted of 12 lots: smaller lots 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, and two larger lots, 497 and 498, occupying the center section of the block.

Block 64 to the City of Beaumont continued to remain in the possession of these three co-partners or their descendants until well after the Civil War.

Henry Millard, born ca. 1796 in Saratoga County, New York, served as Chief Justice of Jefferson County as well as an alderman and Justice of the Peace in the new Town of Beaumont. He subsequently moved to Galveston in 1842, where he was appointed Tax Assessor. Prior to this move, on October 24, 1840, Millard deeded his one-third interest in the Town of Beaumont to Joseph Pulsifer for the sum of \$2,000, payable in cash five years from date of deed or town lots.⁴⁹ Millard executed his final will and testament on August 28, 1844 and died shortly thereafter. He was buried at the Trinity Episcopal Cemetery in Galveston. Millard left his estate to his two sons, Frederick S. Millard and Henry B. Millard. Joseph P. Pulsifer and John R. Tally were appointed executors of Henry Millard's estate on March 4, 1845.⁴⁹ To preserve Millard's interest in the Town of Beaumont from being liquidated or otherwise seized for the payment of debts, Pulsifer deeded his interest in his 1840 contract with Millard back to Millard's estate on October 27, 1845.⁴⁹ On January 10, 1846, the inventory of assets of Millard's estate reflects his "one-third of an interest in Jos. Pulsifer & Co. in the Town of Beaumont say about 113 lots including the improvement[s]". The lots were at valued at \$326.00.⁴⁹ On February 2, 1855 Millard's sons and heirs, Frederick S. Millard and Henry B. Millard, appointed Joseph P. Pulsifer as their attorney in fact to sell all of their town lots in Beaumont, consisting of about "one hundred fourteen or one third of three hundred and forty lots of said town and village, it being our interest in said town".⁴⁹ There is no sale connected on behalf of the Millard heirs by Pulsifer connected with Block 64 of the City of Beaumont.

Merchant Thomas B. Huling, born Oct. 19, 1804 in Pennsylvania, moved away from Beaumont by the mid 1840s. He was appointed as postmaster of Zavalla in Jasper County on May 22, 1846, and served in that capacity until June 15, 1848.⁴⁹ Huling subsequently moved to Lampasas County where he died November 2, 1865 and is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Lampasas.⁴⁹ His son, Thomas Huling, continued to reside in Jasper County. On April 10, 1877, Thomas Huling of Jasper County deeded eight of the twelve lots in Block 64 – Lots 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 495, 496, and 498 – to William Wiess, who in turn deeded these eight same lots to Valentine Wiess, on January 18, 1878.⁴⁹

Joseph P. Pulsifer, born July 8, 1805 in Massachusetts,⁴⁹ served as Clerk, or President, of the Board of Land Commissioners for Jefferson County, taking his oath of office from Chief Justice Henry Millard on January 8, 1838. On September 8, 1840 he was additionally appointed by Mirabeau B. Lamar, President of the Republic of Texas, to serve as Collector of Customs for the Port of Sabine, taking his oath of office from Henry Millard on October 24, 1840.⁴⁹ He served as Beaumont's postmaster and was a druggist by trade.^{49,49} In 1860 he worked as a seaman in Sabine Pass.⁴⁹ Pulsifer died on July 17, 1861. He was unmarried, leaving his sister, Lucy Pulsifer Granger, as his only heir.⁴⁹ Her descendants (Elizabeth P. Sweet, et al) deeded Lot 494, Block 664 to I.R. Bordages on May 10, 1889 and the remaining three lots of Block 64 – 492, 493 and 497 – to Nelson Wright on May 31, 1889.⁴⁹ The heirs resided in Galveston and evidence suggests that they had defaulted on the payment of taxes on these lots and two were sold at a tax sale but subsequently reacquired prior to their resale by the

“1925 Beaumont City Directory places this [Maple Grove Cemetery] east side of Collier’s Ferry Road, between Sheffield and Isla Avenue. Mr. Billy King, of Magnolia Cemetery (1981), remembers a cemetery at this site when he was a boy. It had a few stones, was surrounded by a board fence. Disappeared long ago. He never heard a name for it, believed it to be a Black

heirs.⁴⁹

The first, and only, deed recognizing the use of this property as a cemetery is a June 6, 1895 lease agreement⁴⁹ between Valentine Wiess and Mary Ann Seastrunk wherein the lessee is granted a six month lease of Lot 490, Block 64 as per the Map of Beaumont “upon which there is now a shanty and some graves, known as the “Town Grave Yard.”⁴⁹

At the end of the 1800s and into the beginning of the 20th century saloons, Black tenements, burned buildings, and, briefly, the Magnolia Hotel had sprung up around the outer edges of Block 64.⁴⁹ A contract was entered into in the late 1890s by the federal government and A. L. Nelson, reportedly, for the removal of the Civil War soldiers. However, the task of digging up the entire block proved insurmountable and the project was abandoned.⁴⁹ In 1901, a main track of the Kansas City Southern railway ran over one corner of the lot. That same year, several local citizens, Nancy Bose, Peter Anderson and Rev. Woodson Pipkin, a former enslaved individual, reportedly made affidavits concerning the block’s use as a cemetery for soldiers during the Civil War. Their affidavits do not survive although Rev. Pipkin spoke again in detail about the cemetery in 1916. Having exhausted other attempts to try to save the cemetery, the local Lawton Post No. 80 of the Grand Army of the Republic announced plans in 1901 to contact the U.S. Congress with the hope the federal government might be persuaded to purchase, fence and otherwise beautify the property. It is unclear if the chapter pursued their intended correspondence.⁴⁹

Two coffins were discovered at a depth of about five feet by sewer pipeworkers in 1903 on Jefferson Street “near the Pee Gee depot” (located at that time on Block 67, next to Block 64) and reinterred.⁴⁹ Beaumont Gas Light employees discovered an additional three well preserved coffins on Washington “between Orleans and Trinity Streets” in April 1910, although the bodies therein had turned to dust except for some teeth. The disposition of these additional coffins is unknown.⁴⁹ A follow up news story reporting on this later event noted that “several years earlier” one Federal soldier’s body had been removed from the cemetery although no further particulars were given at the time. The soldier was subsequently determined to be naval officer Lt. Robert Rhodes, R.S.N., whose body was retrieved by his family in 1868.⁴⁹ A grave marker was additionally removed when a line for the preliminary survey of the Kansas City Southern railroad was run up Washington Street.⁴⁹

On March 11, 1916, the Texarkana & Fort Smith Railway Company (Kansas City Southern) sold the City of Beaumont the two large, central lots in Block 64, Lots 497 and 498, initiating the City’s first ownership in this Block.⁴⁹ During construction of Kansas City Southern’s new, large depot straddling Blocks 64 and 67 at that same time (March 1916), some of the graves, “little mounds and broken pieces of crude tombstones”, were still visible on Block 64.⁴⁹

The Kansas City Southern depot eventually closed in 1966. The impressive Mission style building was torn down ten years later, in 1976, following unsuccessful efforts to utilize the building as a youth center.^{49,49} The railroad company sold Lots 487 through 491 on the south side of Block 64 to the City of Beaumont on September 17, 1980, adding to the city’s previous ownership of Lots 497 and 498 in the center of the block.⁴⁹ The City of Beaumont additionally acquired the five lots on the north side of Block 64 (492 through 496) from various individuals in 1980 and Beaumont’s Fire Station No. 1 was constructed on the site and occupied Block 64 from May 1, 1981 to February 17, 2019.⁴⁹ In 2021 the fire station consisted of two buildings totaling more than 18,000 square feet. On March 2, 2021, the City of Beaumont sold all twelve lots comprising Block 64 of the City of Beaumont to Gerald Condon Properties, Ltd.⁴⁹ In its sale listing, the City described the property as “a great automotive repair site, industrial facility, retail or office” or a “very large home.”⁴⁹

The Town Grave Yard and the record of all those interred on its grounds had by then long since ceased to exist.

Cemetery.”

Sheffield Cemetery, however, was established by Arkansas Sheffield and dedicated as “Sheffield Cemetery” on July 9, 1898 (Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 24, pg. 1). It served as the burial ground for family members and friends. It was fenced (Plaintiffs’ Second Amended Original Petition: Cause No. 32084; *Isiah Sheffield, et al v. Neches Lumber & Building Co. et al*, In the District Court of Jefferson County, Texas. Jefferson County District Court Records.). The board fence Mr. King recalled as a youth could very well have been the fence belonging to Neches Lumber & Building Company that was described in detail in the aforementioned lawsuit and subsequent deeds pertaining to the Sheffield Addition. Maple Grove Baptist Church inhabited Lot 10, Block 1 of the Sheffield Addition on Pine Street, removed from the Sheffield Cemetery’s location further east in Blocks 4 and 3. There is no extant record to document where Maple Grove Baptist Church’s members were interred, whether in the Sheffield Cemetery (if any its congregants were also members of the Sheffield family) or in any one of a number of neighboring burial grounds, including Martha Mack Cemetery, the Dan Gill Grave Yard, the Robinson Cemetery, Anthony Cemetery, Blanchette No. 2, Simmons Cemetery, Piney Woods Cemetery or Evergreen Cemetery. The appellation “Maple Grove Cemetery” in the Beaumont City Directory as applied to the Sheffield Cemetery appears to simply be a misnomer due to the church’s proximity to this unmarked (albeit official dedicated) family cemetery.

In a City of Beaumont Auditor’s Report for the Quarter Ending June 30, 1920, the municipality lists the “Happ graveyard, 1 acre” as an asset.⁵⁰ However, following a review of multiple deeds and other records there is no evidence that such a graveyard exists.

Frank Happ (aka Franz Happe), was born in Germany ca. 1831.⁵¹ He emigrated to the United States at the age of eighteen with his sister, Theresa, and stayed with his sister and her husband in Milwaukee, Wisconsin prior to enlisting at Lincoln, Michigan on August 15, 1861 for service during the Civil War.⁵² Sergeant Happe served four years, 9 months with Co. D of the 37th Illinois Infantry before receiving his discharge on May 5, 1866 and mustering out at Houston on May 15, 1866.⁵³

According to his children, Frank Happe met his future wife, Mary Will, while stationed with federal occupation forces at Sabine Pass during the war.⁵⁴ He subsequently married Mary on June 7, 1866 in Beaumont⁵⁵ and moved briefly to Fon du Lac, Wisconsin, where the couple’s eldest child, Mary Elizabeth Happ,⁵⁶ was born in 1868. The family soon returned to Texas, however, and first resided in Smith Bluff (north of Nederland) prior to moving to Beaumont. Frank and Mary’s sons, John (b. 1870) and Frank (b. 1875) and daughter, Tracy (b. 1875) were all born in Smith Bluff.⁵⁷ The couple’s final child, Joe, was born ca. 1881, location unknown but possibly Beaumont.⁵⁸

On September 22, 1876, William McFaddin deeded Frank and Mary Happe eight acres in the J. Drake Survey.⁵⁹ The property was bounded on its east by the “Bayou” and the north by “___ . Brown’s” tract, according to the deed.

On May 14, 1884, Frank Happe deeded the south half of his eight-acre tract to Mary Echols,⁶⁰ retaining the north four acres as his homestead. Mary Happe did not execute this deed along with her husband, Frank Happe, and she may by this time have already been deceased.

An 1890 Veterans Schedule for Jefferson County reveals that Frank Happ, former Sergeant, Co. D, 37th Illinois Infantry lived in Enumeration District 76.⁶¹ However, sometime prior to early 1902, he died.

On April 12, 1902, the children and surviving heirs of Frank and Mary Happ, Mrs. Mary E. Happ Collier, John Happ, Tracy Happ and Joe Happ, partitioned the Happ homestead four-acre tract into four separate tracts of approximately equal size. The Partition Deed includes a Map of the Happ Addition to the City of Beaumont. An east-west “Happ Avenue” divides Lots 1 and 4 of the Happ Addition on its south from Lots 2 and 3 on its north. The east side of the Happ Addition is bounded by Brakes Bayou, the west side by Collier’s Ferry Road.

According to family oral history provided by Frank Happ and Mary Happ’s two eldest children, Mary Elizabeth Happ Collier and John Happ,⁶² patriarch Frank Happ is buried in an

⁵⁰ “City of Beaumont Auditor’s Report,” *Beaumont Journal*, September 1, 1920, pg. 11

⁵¹ Happ, Frank: 1880 United States Federal Census, Justice Precinct 1, Jefferson County, Texas, ancestry.com

⁵² Oral Happ family history: Mary Elizabeth Happ Collier and John Collier (undated), ancestry.com

⁵³ Happ, Frank: Texas, U.S., Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1820-1890, Texas 1890 Federal Veterans Schedule, Jefferson County, Texas, ED No. 76, ancestry.com. See also U.S., Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861-1865, ancestry.com

⁵⁴ Oral Happ family history: Mary Elizabeth Happ Collier and John Collier (undated), ancestry.com

⁵⁵ Texas, U.S., Select County Marriage Records, 1837-1965, ancestry

⁵⁶ Mary Elizabeth Happ Collier: Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982, ancestry.com. Fon du lac, Wisconsin was also the home of Frank Happ’s sister, Theresa (Oral Happ family history: Mary Elizabeth Happ Collier and John Collier (undated), ancestry.com)

⁵⁷ John Happ and Perry, Tracy Happ: Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982, ancestry.com

⁵⁸ Happ, Joe: 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Beaumont Ward 1, Jefferson County, Texas, ancestry.com

⁵⁹ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 4, pg. 114

⁶⁰ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. W, pg. 576

⁶¹ Happ, Frank: Texas, U.S., Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1820-1890, Texas 1890 Federal Veterans Schedule, Jefferson County, Texas, ED No. 76, ancestry.com

⁶² Oral Happ family history: Mary Elizabeth Happ Collier and John Collier (undated), ancestry.com)

“Unmarked grave on slope on southside of old part of Magnolia Cemetery. {McFadden [William McFaddin] gave everyone in Bmt a lot when he designated land for cemetery (pauper’s graves)} Large Cedar Tree on Lot;”

Per this same source,⁶³ matriarch Mary (Will) Happ and several other family members are also buried at Magnolia Cemetery:

Also buried there: Mary Elizabeth Dreywood Will Happ, Florence Poinboeuf (dtr of Tracy Happ Perry), son Joe Happ, son Frank Happ”

Frank and Mary Happ, their granddaughter, Florence Poinboeuf, and son, Frank Happ, all died pre-1903, before the State of Texas began standardizing death records. An obituary for Joe Happ, who died at Denison, Texas, appears in the November 6, 1917 *Beaumont Journal*, corroborating his burial at Magnolia.⁶⁴ Mary Elizabeth Happ Collier (b. 11/20/1868, d. 2/27/1959), Frank and Mary Happ’s eldest daughter who provided her family’s history, is also interred at Magnolia Cemetery.⁶⁵

A thorough review of local newspapers, City Directories as well as deeds pertaining to the lots of the Happ Addition has been conducted, paying particular attention to property descriptions in each deed for a reference to a graveyard, burial ground, cemetery or the like on the Happ acreage. There are none. The goal of this research was also to determine whether or not the City of Beaumont owned any portion of the Happ Addition as of June 30, 1920, the date of its Auditor’s Report listing the Happ Graveyard as an asset. It is also noteworthy that the location of the City’s “Happ Graveyard” was not specified in their Audit Report, and if this cemetery was presumed to occupy only one of the four lots, or parts of two or more lots.

Lot 1 of the Happ Addition changed hands several times but eventually became the property of T. J. Charlton, who was still its owner post-1920 - the date the City claimed ownership in the “Happ Graveyard.” Lot 2 had similarly changed ownership several times but still belonged to a Charles Savino by the 1930s. Lots 3 and 4 of the Happ Addition, as well as the additional four acres that had earlier been sold off by patriarch Frank Happe/Happ to Mary Echols in 1884, were all acquired at different times by John R. Callaghan and sold at the same time to Neches Lumber & Building Co. in 1923 for a substantial sum.

The City of Beaumont did not start acquiring an interest in the Happ Addition until over a decade after its June 30, 1920 asset list was published, beginning with a small conveyance of 3300 square feet on June 6, 1931 from Neches Lumber & Building Company.⁶⁶ Neches Lumber & Building Company deeded Lots 1, 3 and 4 to the City of Beaumont on August 24, 1945.⁶⁷ The City finally acquired Lot 2 from Neda Savino on May 15, 1967,⁶⁸ making its ownership of the Happ Addition complete.

Happ family members, including Frank and Mary Happ and three of their five children, Mary Collier, Frank Happ and Joe Happ, are all interred in Magnolia Cemetery. Additional family members, including Frank and Mary Happ’s two other children, John Happ and Tracy Happ Perry,⁶⁹ are interred at nearby Forest Lawn Memorial Park. No evidence, anecdotal or otherwise, supports a burial ground known as the “Happ Graveyard” in the Happ Addition.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ *Beaumont Journal*, November 16, 1917, pg. 4

⁶⁵ Mary Elizabeth Happ Collier: Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982, ancestry.com

⁶⁶ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 357, pg. 572

⁶⁷ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 575, pg. 494

⁶⁸ Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. 1501, pg. 185

⁶⁹ Happ, John and Perry, Tracy Happ: Texas, U.S. Death Certificates, 1903-1982, ancestry.com