

JCHC Bi-Monthly Meeting
Noon, Thursday, November 19, 2015
Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Center
5055 IH-10 South, Beaumont, TX 77705

Call to Order / Greetings – Chair Theresa Goodness called the meeting to order. Those in attendance were: JCHC members Bill Cummings, Theresa Goodness, Bruce Hamilton, Brenda Jackson, Mike McGreevy, Les McMahan, Linda McMahan, Paul Prosperie, Jef Russell, Don Smart and guests Ms. Earline Christ and Paul Alexander.

Consider Minutes of Previous Meeting – Chair Goodness reported that the minutes from the September 24, 2015 meeting had been emailed to all members. She asked if there were any additions or corrections. There were none. A motion was made by Les McMahan and seconded by Bill Cummings to accept the minutes as printed. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report – Linda McMahan shared that in the final review of the 2016 Jefferson County budget by Commissioners Court, the total amount of the JCHC budget was reduced to \$11,600. This amount is less \$1,250 than the 2015 budget. This amount should not cause any burden on the JCHC.

Introduction of Speaker – Chair Goodness introduced our guest speaker, Ms. Earline Christ. Ms. Christ has done extensive research on the Hamshire Post Office. She donated a copy of her research entitled “Hamshire Post Office Centennial 1897-1997.” She also shared her study of schools in the Hamshire area. She shared many original photographs of the different schools and the students who attended the schools. This information continues to be a great help in locating students and family connections from the late 1800s and 1900s for that part of the county. A very informative question and answer period was held after Ms. Christ’s talk.

Chair Report – Theresa Goodness shared the new meeting dates for the 2016 JCHC year. Due to convenience for several members, the majority of the meetings will be held on Wednesday instead of Thursday as in previous years. (See list attached.)

Chair Goodness reminded members that at the September meeting Coordinator Linda McMahan discussed the latest change to the JCHC bylaws that were approved earlier this year. (At the Annual November meeting in even numbered years, we will elect our officers and appoint or reappoint JCHC members. Those names will go before Commissioners Court in January of odd numbered years, along with our Annual Report of the previous year for the Court’s consideration, approval and recording into County records. After such, the officers, appointees and Annual Report will be forwarded to the Texas Historical Commission for their records.)

Since we have already had our officers and appointees approved by Commissioners Court and turned into the THC, members were asked to share on their committee or project being worked on at the November 19, 2015 meeting. This will help bring everyone up to date on the various

areas of history preservation the JCHC is involved in. Also it was requested that each member share suggestions or goals for their particular area.

Year End Reports

Coordinator's Report – Linda McMahan shared that her volunteer hours this year has had to do with learning more about the outlying areas of Jefferson County.

- She worked with Judge Branick and Commissioner Alfred's office with the preparation and follow-through on an oral history of Mr. Cleveland Dyer, whose father is buried in the Lincoln Burial Park.
- She did a drive-through survey of historic properties in Port Arthur.
- Linda did a survey of our marker files to be used for Certified Local Government information.

Linda's goal for 2016 is to work more with our cemeteries and complete an application for the Historic Cemetery Designation for Greenlawn Cemetery in Groves.

Chair – Theresa Goodness reported that she had:

- Created six (6) bi-monthly editions of the JCHC Journal newsletter to inform Commission members of historic preservation news occurring both locally and statewide.
- As part of the Web Committee, she participated in the re-design of the JCHC web page to include much more helpful information about the JCHC work and the County's history for members and the public. Theresa also acted as the go-between with the County's MIS department in updating and posting the new information which included JCHC agendas and minutes as well as all Certified Local Government (CLG) agendas and minutes.
- Theresa monitored the 2015 Texas Legislative Session for historic preservation bills and informed JCHC members of the status of these bills.
- Theresa conducted research on Lincoln Burial Park and met with County officials regarding restoration and clean-up of the cemetery.

Theresa's goals for 2016 include:

- Create a page on the JCHC webpage linked from the Historical Marker page containing all of our marker application files and supporting documentation.
- Conduct an historic resources survey of Jefferson County.
- Continue digitization of JCHC files to provide valuable research material to members and the public.

Archeology – Brenda Jackson reported that she had:

- Helped plan and carry out archeology days at Camp Lookinback, the summer camp held at the John J. French Museum in July.
- Attended the East Texas Archeological Conference in Tyler, February 13-15. Topics included artifact analysis, geoarcheology, 3D laser scanning and digital interpretation of cultural heritage.

- Attended Historical Archeology Academy in Nacogdoches May 2-3, hosted by the Texas Archeological Society. Topics covered were urban archeology, Spanish Colonial archeology and local historic sites. Instruction was provided in historic artifact identification and analysis, including ceramics, glass bottles and metal artifacts.
- A workshop for members of the Texas Archeological Stewardship Network was held at the Gregg County Historical Museum in Longview May 9. The sessions included an introduction to prehistoric east Texas ceramics and an overview of site forms, such as how to use TexSite and TARL submission procedures.

Brenda's goals for 2016 are:

- Inspect and possibly update information about known archeological sites in Jefferson County.
- Assist Dr. Charles Bollich in preparing his report on the David French site, 41TX67.
- Be prepared to offer assistance with archeological projects in the area.
- Ask the regional archeologist with the Texas Historical Commission to present a program about projects in Southeast Texas to JCHC members.

Cemetery – Chair Paul Prosperie and Jimmy Sparks, Director of Magnolia Cemetery

- After much research, Judith Linsley (of the McFaddin-Ward House), **Paul and Jimmy** conducted the Second Annual Cemetery Tour of Beaumont's Magnolia Cemetery on October 19th. It was free and opened to the public. A few highlights of the tour were information on William Patterson, the first Beaumont officer to die in the line of duty; Thomas Langham, Jefferson County sheriff (1877-1899); prominent business woman Jeanette Catherina Stengele (1866-1909); and journalist and historian, Florence Stratton (1881-1938). Judging from the feedback received, the tour was a success. Facilitated by the Jefferson County Historical Commission, the McFaddin-Ward House, and the Beaumont Heritage Society, the tour has become an annual event.
- Paul Prosperie visited most of Jefferson County's cemeteries. The McGaffey and Sabine Pass cemeteries are mowed regularly. The Evergreen Cemetery (Beaumont) was mowed in November.
- Commissioner Alfred's staff began a cleanup of three of the eleven acres of the Lincoln Burial Park on LaBelle Road. Mr. Cleveland Dyer, 97-year Jefferson County resident, contacted the County after seeing a news story about the cleanup on KBMT 12. His father, a resident of Lincoln Burial Park, died in 1932. Mr. Dyer proved to be an important asset in learning the early history of the cemetery.

Paul's goal for 2016 is to have more tours of cemeteries, such as McGaffey and Sabine Pass, Greenlawn (Groves), Oak Bluff (Port Neches), and Pear Orchard (Beaumont). This will only be possible if we have volunteers.

Jimmy Sparks – Magnolia Cemetery shared his volunteer hours for 2015 were spent:

- Researching Veterans graves for Veterans Day Ceremony
- Conducting cemetery tours

- Researching Magnolia Cemetery and maintaining Facebook page
- Helping the community with genealogy requests.

Courthouse Oversight – **Linda McMahan** reported the JCHC is monitoring the progress of the restoration project currently underway on the historic Jefferson County Courthouse. The project includes installation of a new HVAC system and a new fire alarm and sprinkler system. The Café, located in the basement, will be closed the month of December as work will be going on in that location. Work will begin in January on repairing terminate and water damage in the Commissioners Courtroom. During that time, Court will be held in the Jury Impaneling Room.

Historical Markers – **Les McMahan**, Marker Chair, reported:

- 2015 Markers West Beulah Missionary Baptist Church
Beaumont, Installed
- 2016 Markers St. Paul United Methodist Church (proposed)
Port Arthur, Application accepted as complete by THC

Sabine Pass Lighthouse (proposed), Port Arthur

Although quite a bit of information has been found, very little has been found to date that is sufficient to build an application on the basis of how the Louisiana lighthouse has been instrumental to water-borne commerce in Texas. Research will continue, and whatever approach is taken (commerce, Civil War incidences, other contexts, etc.), the application will be written well before the 2017 cycle begins.

Goals / Improvements for 2017 Cycle (Oct. 1st – Nov. 15th, 2016)

- Encourage more marker applications from a wider field of interest – churches have been predominant in recent years.
- Encourage marker applications prepared by JCHC members, who have a wide collective interest of topics.
- Prior to the THC acceptance period in late 2016, post a notice on the JCHC website and in local newspapers requesting prospective marker sponsors to contact the JCHC for details regarding the application process, and for an assessment of the topic of interest.

Texas Treasure Business Awards – **Jef Russell** had no new information on contacts with local businesses who qualify for the Texas Treasure Business Awards from the THC. Jef has been very helpful at the Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Center helping tourist gather information to visit local and regional historic sites. We were sorry to learn at the end of the meeting that Jef was resigning from his position on the Jefferson County Historical Commission to undertake new endeavors. Jef will be greatly missed.

Web Site – **Bill Cummings**, Chair, reported:

- The Website Committee (Bill, Theresa Goodness, Linda McMahan) met on several occasions throughout the year.
- A more orderly structure for the history text section was proposed which will simplify the navigation and maintenance of the lengthy file. Post card images from the Sam Houston

Regional Library and Research Center captured turn of the century buildings as well as rice production, timber transport, and shipping. A selection of these will eventually find their way into the history text.

Goals for 2016 are to:

- Integrate the narratives with the historical markers for Jefferson County and to insert images at appropriate locations in the history text.
- Complete the history text through the 20th century by including Oil & Gas production, Petrochemical Refining, Shipbuilding, Channelization and Shipping, etc.

Local Historical Photographs – Steven Lewis shared:

- He has been researching for a presentation at the Tyrrell Historical Library Annual Meeting on the Millard School, Thomas A. Holland, photographer and the Goodhue Building.
- Researching for a presentation titled “Reading Other People’s Mail” which is about interesting narratives on postcards.
- Researching for a presentation called “Beaumont Then and Now” which is a comparison between old postcards and what the view is now.
- Researching a fourth program on postcards history.

Sam Houston State Library – Don Smart (Bruce Hamilton, Mike McGreevy) shared:

- Researching on Beaumont Baseball at the turn of the century (1900-1920). Research is ongoing.
- Doing research to write a history on French High School, located in the north end of Beaumont. Research is ongoing.
- **Bruce Hamilton, Mike McGreevy** and Don are doing research on the A. S. Johnston Camp #75 United Confederate Veterans which was located in Beaumont. This research is to write the history of this camp from beginning to end. Research is ongoing.

Museum of the Gulf Coast – Sarah Bellian shared her work at the Museum of the Gulf Coast is ongoing. She has worked on such projects as:

- Photo Preservation
- Ted Elice Exhibition
- Construction and painting, general housekeeping
- Volunteer Training Day
- Represent Museum at Montage Arts Council Event
- Private tour for Chevron Accounting Department
- Data Migration, finish cleaning engine order telegraph
- Opening for “Sufficient for Lifesaving” exhibit.

Ben Rogers Visitors Center – **Jessie Davis** – shared her work is ongoing at the Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Center.

- Since JCHC meetings are held at the Visitors Center, some volunteer hours are preparing and attending meetings.
- Assisting visitors to Visitors Center in regards to visiting historic places in Jefferson County and surrounding areas.
- Friends and family research – searching city directories, phone books, cemetery information trying to locate Afro-Americans in Jefferson County.

Port Arthur Landmark Commission – **Les McMahan** – The Port Arthur Landmark Commission meets as needed. If you are interested in attending, please contact Les for meeting dates.

Unfinished Business / New Business

None

Adjournment

Next meeting is scheduled Noon, Friday, January 22, 2016 at the Ben Rogers Visitors Center. NOTE: This will be the only meeting held on Friday.