

JCHC JOURNAL

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

CEMETERY PRESERVATION WORKSHOP

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- March 19, 2025
- May 21, 2025
- July 16, 2025
- September 17, 2025
- November 19, 2025

The Jefferson County Historical Commission was honored to partner with the Cemetery Division of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) on February 12th, 2025 for a cemetery preservation workshop at the Tyrrell Historical Library and Pear Orchard Cemetery. The Cemetery Program Coordinator, Jenny McWilliams, and Cemetery Preservation Program Specialists, Carlyn Copeland Hammons and Alan Garcia created a wonderful presentation which encompassed numerous topics related to cemetery preservation. The workshop was broken into three sessions; a presentation, a roundtable discussion and a visit to a Historic Texas Cemetery, the Pear Orchard Cemetery.

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Photo Credit: Dr. Steven P. Lewis

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The classroom portion of the workshop impressed upon attendees the importance of surveying cemeteries— that is, physically walking through the cemeteries and documenting each burial marker to begin a sort of database for the cemetery. As cemeteries age, particularly in flood-prone areas such as Jefferson County, the risk of deterioration of grave markers increases. Along with that, the THC staff shared information about different burial customs across cultures found in Jefferson County. In cemeteries that primarily served African American people, homemade headstones and memorial plantings were common and through time, have often been lost to weather and other outside . A survey doesn't stop deterioration, but it tells us what was once there, as a snapshot in time.

The presentation also thoroughly focused on the establishment and administration of cemetery associations, a tool used for decades to crowdsource support for cemeteries which are not overseen by other organizations. Cemetery associations are helpful not only in fundraising, but also in establishing grassroots efforts to encourage people to physically care for endangered cemeteries, using best practices.

The visit to the Pear Orchard Cemetery gave everyone a chance to see first-hand the topics discussed during the morning classroom session. Standing in the cemetery and observing the wide variety of issues which face all endangered cemeteries gave a true scope of what it takes to survey, document and care for these historical treasures, and why laying the groundwork with data, research and established cemetery associations is the best path to long-term preservation.



Photo Credit: Dr. Steven P. Lewis



Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie



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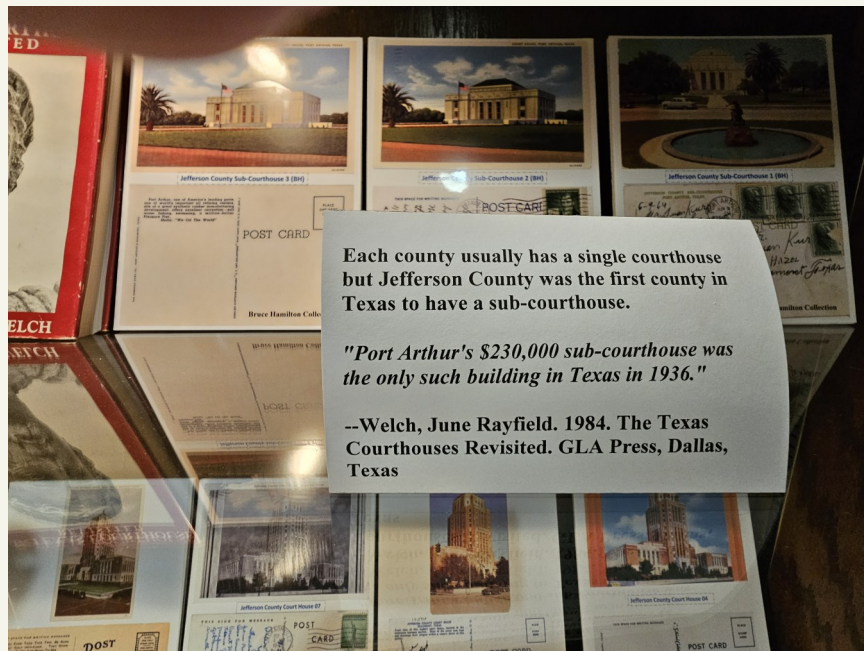
JEFFERSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE MINI MUSEUM DISPLAY



Dr. Steven P. Lewis created a wonderful display of postcards of the Jefferson County Courthouses and sub-courthouse. The display ran through the month of February and will be back on display in May for those who missed it.



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Christy Bros. Circus bandleader Everett James shown in 1922 with his son Harry James. Photo credit: syncopated-times.com/harry-james-profiles-in-jazz/

Henry Haag "Harry" James was an American musician who became famous as one of the most popular bandleaders during the "Big Band" or "Swing Band" era of the 1930s and 1940s. He was born in 1916 in Albany, Georgia. When Harry was eight his parents settled in Beaumont, where his father, Everette, was a music teacher. Everette set up a studio in their home located at 2095 Neches Street which is now Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway. Harry James joined Dick Dowling Junior High School Orchestra and at Beaumont High School he joined the Royal Purple Band. He began his professional career in 1934 when he toured with Joe Gill. In 1935 James joined Ben Pollack's Band where he made his recording debut with "Spreading Knowledge Around." In 1937, Benny Goodman heard James play and offered him a job with his orchestra. James started his own band in 1940 with Goodman's blessing and financial support. James recorded many popular songs including "You Made Me Love You" and "Flight of the Bumble Bee," and by 1942 he was one of the most popular musicians in the country. James was instrumental in jumpstarting the careers of famous entertainers, such as singer Frank Sinatra and drummer Buddy Rich. His film career began with *Hollywood Hotel*, but also included other films like *Two Girls and a Sailor*, *Young Man With a Horn*, *The Benny Goodman Story*, *Anything Goes*, and *Springtime In The Rockies* with his second wife, actress Betty Grable. Harry James has been called "one of the most essential trumpeters and bandleaders in the history of American music." His innovative playing style influenced trumpeters and changed the history of jazz. Harry James died in 1983 and is buried in Las Vegas, Nevada. (2012)

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 6, 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.— Exhibit Opening: “Between Surface Noise and Song”- Chambers House Museum, 2240 Calder Avenue, Beaumont, TX. Call 409-898-0348 for more information.

March 20, 5:30 p.m.— 7:30 p.m.— Heritage Happy Hour at Magnolia Cemetery, presented by the Beaumont Heritage Society. 2291 Pine Street, Beaumont, TX. Call 409-898-0348 for more information.

March 28, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.— Music at the McFaddins’ featuring the Stringbenders. 1906 McFaddin Avenue, Beaumont, TX. Call 409-832-2134 for more information.

March 29, 10 a.m.— 1 p.m.— Spring Family Fun Day at the Museum of the Gulf Coast. 700 Proctor Street, Port Arthur, TX. Call 409-982-7000 for more information.

April 10, 6:30 p.m.— 8:30 p.m.— McFaddin-Ward House Lecture Series: “The Three F’s of Art Crime...”. 1906 Calder, Beaumont, TX. Call 409-832-2134 for more information.

April 26, 10:00 a.m.— Historic Sacred Spaces and the Jefferson County Historical Commission marker dedication of the Texas Historic Cemetery marker for the Pear Orchard Cemetery at the southwest corner of Hegele and Inca Streets.

GET IN TOUCH

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