

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

At long last the Tyrrell Historical Library re-opened this month after a long restoration to repair damage caused by Hurricane Harvey. The library is a vital resource for researchers, and an important repository of this area's history. Many residents turned out for the Grand Re-Opening on January 22, 2020, to celebrate this milestone and to show appreciation to the City of Beaumont and the Library Association for a job well done.

Thank you to our members for your time and service.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair



Tyrrell Historical Library
Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

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JANUARY, 2020

Special points of interest:

- * Jefferson County Fast Facts
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JEFFERSON COUNTY FAST FACTS

102

Number of marriage licenses issued in Jefferson County in the year 1896. By 1941 the total number of licenses issued was 2208, which increased to 3280 in 1946 after WWII ended.

6/22/1857

Date the Sabine Pass lighthouse went into service. Benjamin Granger was the first lighthouse keeper. Congress allocated \$30,000 in funds on 3/3/1853 for a first-class lighthouse at the mouth of the Sabine River.

\$600

Amount paid by county to W.P.H. McFaddin on January 12, 1920, for two dipping vats constructed at his expense at Needmore and Sabine Pass, conditioned that consent be given for future use of said vats by county.

PRESERVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The application period for the Preservation Scholars Program will open January 6! The program offers students from underrepresented ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as those from non-traditional academic backgrounds, exposure to the work of the THC and the wide variety of degrees and specializations applicable to historic preservation.

[Learn more and apply here.](#)

Launched in 2007, the program is an 8-week, paid, summer internship placement within the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Internships are available to college students from Texas or studying to receive their undergraduate or graduate degree at a Texas college or university. Working with THC staff, students gain exposure to various exciting vocational opportunities in the fields of history, preservation, architecture, archaeology, downtown revitalization, and heritage tourism. Following a rotation among all THC divisions headquartered in Austin, students complete a special project based on their primary area of interest or academic background. The THC is able to offer students a number of unique opportunities because of the agency's broad scope of work within the field. Agency staff range from economists, to marine archeologists, to military historians, exposing students to how their expertise is applied in historic preservation.

The Preservation Scholars Program is made possible by the support of organizations and individuals. Funding for the 2020 program cycle has been provided in part by the Fondren Fund for Texas of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Credit: [Friends of the Texas Historical Commission website](#)

UPCOMING JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2020

Meetings to be held at Noon at the Jefferson County Courthouse, 1149 Pearl Street, 3rd Floor, Beaumont, TX 77701 in the JCHC Conference Room.

- March 11, 2020
- May 13, 2020
- July 15, 2020
- September 16, 2020
- November 18, 2020

VOLUNTEER HOURS AND MEMBERSHIP

Any work in the preservation or promotion of Jefferson County History may be counted toward your volunteer hours. JCHC meetings and travel time to and from meetings also count as volunteer hours. Members are reminded that at least 50 hours of volunteer work per year is required of each member. Also with the number of hours, JCHC

needs a general description of work performed, for example: 3 Hours – Marker Survey. If you have any questions, please call the office at 409-835-8701 or contact Linda via email at histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us

PRESERVATION PARTNERS

Beaumont Heritage Society
 Beaumont Landmark Commission
 Port Arthur Landmark Commission
 Texas Historical Foundation
 Beaumont Main Street
 Museum of the Gulf Coast
 Tyrrell Historical Library

BEAUMONT MAIN STREET ANNUAL MEETING



Beaumont Main Street held its annual meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2020, in downtown Beaumont at the historic Broussard Building, 434 Fannin, which was constructed in 1903 as a funeral parlor. The Broussard family has lovingly restored the building over the past ten years, keeping exposed brickwork and ceiling beams as a focus of the handsome décor. The high ceilings and lots of natural light from the rows of windows give the interior a sense of being quite expansive. The building is to be used as an event space which is certain to bring more people to downtown Beaumont. The event included an

award ceremony where a “Red Brick Award” was given out to five-year member, Steven Lewis, JCHC member, and “Lighting the Way Awards” were bestowed on ten-year members, Debbie Cowart, Texas Regional Title and Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair. Other award recipients included a Texas Treasure Business Award to Provost Umphrey Law Firm and several twenty-year member awards, including one to St. Anthony’s Basilica. Tom Flanagan gave a presentation on all of the progress made in downtown since the 1980’s and a preview of projects currently in the works such as the Gilbert Building, Goodhue Building, the AT&T Building, and the First National Bank Building on Orleans.



Top Left Photo: Broussard Building as depicted on Beaumont Main Street’s Invitation to the 2020 Annual Meeting Photo Credit: Beaumont Main Street

Top Right Photo: Steven Lewis with his Red Brick Award and Thomas Ashworth Photo Credit: Carol Gary

At Left: Jim Broussard and Councilman Mike Getz

Bottom Photo: Attendees of the Annual Meeting enjoy the ambiance of the newly restored Broussard Building

Photo Credits: Steven Lewis, JCHC Member



TYRRELL HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND SANDERS-MCNEILL HOUSE GRAND RE-OPENING CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 13, 2020, Beaumont, Texas The Tyrrell Historical Library (formerly First Baptist Church) and the historic Sanders-McNeill House, located in downtown Beaumont, suffered severe damages during Hurricane Harvey forcing them to close. The two historical treasures shared very similar re-construction challenges, including Tropical Storm Imelda. Both sites have overcome numerous obstacles and have completed a second major restoration. Both properties are recorded Texas and National Historic Landmarks. They will reopen this month.

The public is invited to help celebrate the preservation of these important historical landmarks by attending a free event that includes tours of both properties. In a joint effort, the City of Beaumont Library Services, the Tyrrell Historical Library Association, Alan & Barbara McNeill, and Beaumont Main Street will celebrate the milestone. The Grand Re-Opening celebration is Wednesday, January 22, 2020 2:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Public tours and light refreshments provided by Amelia Farms will be offered at the Sanders-McNeill House, 479 Pine Street 2:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. Designated free parking will be offered at the Beaumont Fire Department Central Fire Station, 400 Walnut Street. Guests are invited to use the rear entrance to the home.

Tyrrell Historical Library, 695 Pearl Street will celebrate at 4:00 p.m. with a ribbon cutting. Guided tours of the library will follow until 6:00 p.m. The event will include a program at 5:00 p.m. featuring local historian Judy Linsley and genealogy expert Larry Casey. History, genealogy and architectural enthusiasts are promised an educational experience. Guests will be invited to consider joining the Tyrrell Historical Library Association.

The two historic landmarks in downtown Beaumont share a unique architectural piece. They each have a distinctive late 1890's hand carved spiral staircase featuring immaculate steps. The staircases were built by Master Carver Robert Washington Sanders. Despite the period preferring building with factory-made wood, Sanders used his craftsman skills to construct and hand carve impressive mantels, staircases, pulpits and altars in Beaumont. His carvings serve as a reminder that Beaumont was a hub for the lumber industry prior to the discovery of Spindletop in 1901.

For Additional Information or to arrange personal interviews please contact:

Paul Eddy, Library Administrator, Beaumont Public Library System 409-981-5911

E-mail: Paul.Eddy@BeaumontTexas.gov or

Barbara McNeill, Sanders-McNeill House 409-866-4353

E-mail: bsgmcneill@sbcglobal.net

TYRRELL HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND SANDERS-MCNEILL HOUSE GRAND RE-OPENING CELEBRATIONS CONTINUED

Tyrrell Historical Library originally built in 1903 as Beaumont's First Baptist Church, the building was purchased by Captain W.C. Tyrrell and donated to the City for use as a library in the 1920s. It is an excellent example of the style of Henry Hobson Richardson's Romanesque Revival architecture. In 1990, the City of Beaumont and the Tyrrell Historical Library Association restored the structure. The combination of a contemporary library and a historic church is beautifully illustrated in this building. The stained-glass windows, the dome ceiling and the subtle paint scheme create a quiet ambience in this historic site that is home to a research library with collections devoted to the study of Texas as well as genealogy.

The Tyrrell Historical Library sustained damage in both Hurricane Harvey and Tropical Storm Imelda. It also sustained ongoing water intrusion damage due to aging defects found in the exterior walls of the original library building. Over the past three years extensive renovation work was undertaken on the library building to restore it back to its former resplendent condition. New tuck-pointing and water proofing of the exterior limestone was performed. This was followed by interior mold and fungus remediation caused by the hurricane, the repainting of the gothic vaulted interior dome, and then the replacement of wooden boards destroyed or damaged by termite infestation caused from past water intrusion problems. The operating control panel of the elevator also had to be replaced after basement flooding caused by Tropical Storm Imelda. And finally, the re-plastering and repainting of walls needed to be done before the building could once again be available for public research use.

Sanders-McNeill House in 1895, Robert Washington Sanders and his wife Ida Mae built what is now one of the oldest existing homes in Beaumont. Mr. Sanders was a master woodcarver and cabinetmaker. The home is an excellent example of Queen Anne architecture with its gingerbread ornamentation. The building was saved from demolition by the Beaumont Heritage Society and is privately owned by Mr. and Mrs. Alan McNeill. The McNeill's completed the first restoration in 1983. The McNeill's also own Effie Sanders Cottage next door. It is a one-story wooden frame house that is significant because of its Classic Revival Style.

Upon completion of the first restoration and for the past 38 years, the historic home was used as a law office for Alan McNeill and was home to Architects Marvin Gordy and Bill Huffines. The Southeast Texas weather and storms combined with heavy rains from Harvey in 2017 caused noticeable damage and closure. In 2018, owners were finally able to contract an experienced carpenter to begin the second restoration. The project started with the turret and gingerbread work on the front of the house. Realizing the work was more extensive, owners hired another contractor who could carefully restore the interior and siding featuring Sherwin Williams historic colors. Light fixtures were restored, as well as heating and air conditioning. Damaged window sills were carefully replicated where needed. The spiral stairs were reinforced. The beautiful mantle surrounds and wainscoting and trim were cleaned bringing the home to a complete second restoration in January 2020. The McNeill's are committed to preserving the history of one of Beaumont's oldest homes and will announce plans for the home in the future.

Credit: Tyrrell Historical Library Association Press Release
P.O. Box 12563
Beaumont, TX 77726-2563

TYRRELL HISTORICAL LIBRARY GRAND RE-OPENING CELEBRATION CONTINUED BY PAUL PROSPERIE



On January 22, the Tyrrell Historical Library held its grand reopening. For over two years since being damaged by the flooding from Hurricane Harvey, the library has finally been restored and is ready for researchers to take advantage of this gem. At that time, though, the staff was not idle and had been working on scanning the archives. The Tyrrell now has 80,000 items on the website and over 90 collections for all the world to see online. Thanks to all who have worked hard in restoring this asset and make it better for those of us frequent its doors.



Photographs of Tyrrell Historical Library Grand Re-Opening Celebration

Top Photo: Ribbon Cutting by Administrator Paul Eddy, Councilman W.L. Pate, Dora Nisby, Library Manager William Grace, and Steven Lewis, Tyrrell Historical Library Association President and JCHC member

Photo Credits: Paul Prosperie

HYMAN ASHER PERLSTEIN 1869-1948



Perlstein Office Building

Credit: Postcard of Perlstein Office Building in Beaumont, postcard, November 6, 1911; United States. (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph562444/>; accessed December 30, 2019), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting McFaddin-Ward House Museum.

Photograph of Art Museum plaque honoring Hyman Asher Perlstein

Credit: https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMZYG_M_Hyman_Asher_Perlstein_Beaumont_TX

An item regarding the history of the Perlstein family appeared in the latest edition of Lamar's *Cadence* magazine. At left is a postcard depicting the six-story Perlstein building erected in 1907, and, at the time, the tallest building between Houston and New Orleans.

The Art Museum of Southeast Texas now sits on the block where this building stood before being destroyed by fire in 1944. A brass plaque on the museum's exterior tells the tale of Hyman Asher Perlstein, a Lithuanian immigrant, businessman and philanthropist.

Text of Plaque: HYMAN ASHER PERLSTEIN (1869-1948)

Born in Lithuania, which at the time was controlled by Russia; came to the United States of America at age 15; arrived in Beaumont in 1889; married Miriam Gordon in 1893; three daughters survived: Lillian Perlstein Selber, Eleanor Perlstein Weinbaum, and Juliet Perlstein Simon. Mr. Perlstein was a blacksmith, entrepreneur, capitalist, and an early developer of downtown Beaumont. He was loved and respected for his generous acts, and in 1947 was awarded the Exchange Club's Golden Deeds Award.

THE GRANITE COLUMN The granite column was the cornerstone for the six-story Perlstein Building, completed in 1907, and, at the time, the tallest building between Houston and New Orleans. The top floor of the building was occupied by physicians, and the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce had its offices on the fifth floor. S.H. Kress was a ground floor tenant for 70 years. In 1944 the building was destroyed by fire and in 1946 a new five-story building was built. It was demolished in 1977.

OTHER PROPERTY OWNERS While the Perlstein Building occupied the southwest corner of the block, other property owners included Jae Gordon, Sol Gordon, the T.S. Reed family; the Liberty Theater and the Temperance Hall were also in this block. A three-story annex behind Kress housed the Beaumont Implement Company and the Beaumont Enterprise and Journal.



119TH ANNIVERSARY OF LUCAS GUSHER



Spindletop Gusher Reenactment at Gladys City Boomtown Museum
Credit: Paul Prosperie

The Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum celebrated the 119th anniversary of the Lucas Gusher on Saturday, January 11. The festivities began with a few words from Beaumont Mayor Becky Ames, followed by the blowing of the gusher. Afterward, the ladies of the temperance movement marched onto the grounds, took control of the Log Cabin Saloon, and converted it into a Victorian tea room, to the dismay of some local wildcatters. The ladies took full advantage by teaching those who were present about the etiquette and history of this early tea-time ritual.

There was plenty of family entertainment throughout the day, some of which was provided by the Big Thicket Outlaws, a local group of re-enactors that specialize in shoot 'em ups and excellent historical-type skits and that includes some members of the Jefferson County Historical Commission. Amid the gunplay, the Sweet Adelines made an appearance, displaying their musical talents in the Coraline

Room during the lunch hour. Other festivities included a bullwhip demonstration. Actors Jaelyn and Madison Henson also took the time to teach a few attendees, both young and old, a lesson in this vintage art.

There was much to see at this event, and kudos go out to the volunteers stationed throughout the Gladys City buildings, ready to answer a question or two (or three) from the multitude of visitors who attended.

This event is held annually to honor what was, at the time, the largest oil find to date, which turned Beaumont, Texas, into a boomtown in 1901. The Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum is open Tuesday–Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 1–5 p.m.



Above: Don Smart, Big Thicket Outlaw and JCHC member, performs a skit

Above right: Bullwhip demonstration

Right: Ladies Temperance Union

Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie



AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

Museum of the Gulf Coast

January 19 - April 27, 2020

Southeast Texas Sports: Hometown Heroes

Credit: [Museum of the Gulf Coast website](#)



Museum of the Gulf Coast

Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



Photo Credit: Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum website

Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown

EVENTS:

Elementary Blacksmith Class

Saturday, February 8, 2020

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Printing Day and Linotype Film Showing

Saturday, February 29, 2020

1:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.

Credit: [Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum website](#)

McFaddin-Ward House Museum

One Mountain, Many Stories: Difficult Truths at Monticello
February 13, 2020 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

The McFaddin-Ward House is proud to present One Mountain, Many Stories: Difficult Truths at Monticello. This lecture features Monticello Museum's own Niya Bates who was instrumental in getting the story of Sally Hemings written into its chapters. Bates is the director of African American History at Monticello and director of the African American Oral History Project known as Getting Word. Ms. Bates will discuss the challenges she and others faced in getting difficult truths incorporated into the museum where America's Thomas Jefferson once lived.

Credit: [McFaddin-Ward House Museum](#)



McFaddin-Ward House Museum

Photo Credit: [McFaddin-Ward House Museum website](#)

**JEFFERSON
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

1149 Pearl Street
Third Floor
Beaumont, TX 77701

Tel: 409-835-8701

E-mail:

histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us
Linda McMahan, Coordinator



*To preserve and
promote history within
the County.*

We're on the web!
[http://co.jefferson.tx.us/
Historical_Commission/](http://co.jefferson.tx.us/Historical_Commission/)

Jefferson County Historical Commission

Executive Board 2019 - 2020

Chairman, Theresa Goodness

1st Vice-Chairman, Bruce A. Hamilton

2nd Vice-Chairman, Les McMahan

Treasurer, Linda McMahan

Secretary, Jen Trenbeath

**JCHC MINI-MUSEUM
"FOREST PARK HIGH SCHOOL"**



The Jefferson County Historical Commission is proud to announce its latest exhibit, "Forest Park High School," housed in the Mini-Museum located on the first floor of the Jefferson County Courthouse. The exhibit contains a sampling of the rich history of Beaumont's Forest Park High School Trojans. The exhibit includes such items as Trojan football programs, annuals, pictures and news articles. We are thankful for JCHC member Brenda Jackson for putting this exhibit together. The Mini-Museum hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM through 5:00 PM. The exhibit will be on display through January 30, 2020.

Forest Park High School Memorabilia Exhibit in
Courthouse Mini-museum
Photo Credit: Linda McMahan

