

JCHC JOURNAL

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION VOLUME 2013, ISSUE 1

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

At our last meeting the membership adopted the following goals for 2013:

- ◆ Goal 1 - Continue oversight of Courthouse Preservation – interior renovation still needed. Monitor Commissioner's Court action on any proposed projects or possible bond issue.
- ◆ Goal 2 - Develop a cultural and historic resources survey for Jefferson County CLG – Grant application has been submitted.
- ◆ Goal 3 – Support the establishment of a Film Commission to encourage cultural and historic tourism in Jefferson County.
- ◆ Goal 4 – Redesign the JCHC website and increase available content by digitizing and posting marker narrative information and other available historical data online such as cemetery surveys.
- ◆ Goal 5 – Marker Issues – Promote another healthy marker application year.



Thank you to all of our members for your time and service.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair

VOLUME 2013, ISSUE 1

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JANUARY, 2013

Special points of interest:

- * Next Meeting.
- * Volunteer Hours.
- * Mini-museum
- * CLG News

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

The Texas Historical Commission is expected to announce the winners of the Certified Local Government grants in February, 2013.

THC has a budget of \$100,000 from the National

Parks Service to distribute to CLG's throughout the state.

Due to the fact we are a new CLG and an historic and cultural resources survey has never been done in the area covered by our CLG, we

have reason to believe our application will be looked upon favorably by the Texas Historical Commission.

As soon as the winners are announced, the membership will be notified of our status.

BEAUMONT MAIN STREET



Historic Downtown Beaumont in 1930's

Beaumont Main Street has launched a new advertising campaign of public service announcements to bring attention to downtown Beaumont. Their website has a wonderful walking tour guide to historic downtown. The guide can be accessed at:

[http://
www.beaumontmainstreet.com/
pdf/promo/tour.pdf](http://www.beaumontmainstreet.com/pdf/promo/tour.pdf)

NEXT JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2013

January 24, 2013	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor
March 21, 2013	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor
May 23, 2013	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor
July 25, 2013	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor
September 26, 2013	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor
December 5, 2013	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor

VOLUNTEER HOURS

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. (Emeritus members do not have to meet this requirement.)

Also with the number of hours, JCHC needs a general description of work performed, for example: 3 Hours – Marker Survey.

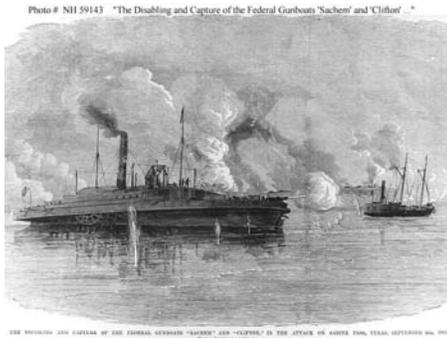
If you have any questions, please call the office at 409-835-8701 or contact Linda via email at histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us

PRESERVATION PARTNERS

Beaumont Heritage Society
Landmark Commission
Texas Historical Foundation
Friends of Sabine Pass Park
Beaumont Main Street
Museum of the Gulf Coast

USS CLIFTON WALKING BEAM

The USS Clifton “Walking Beam” has been installed at the Sabine Pass Battleground after a two year restoration conducted by the Texas A&M conservation lab and sponsored by the Texas Historical Commission. The “Walking Beam” was removed from Beaumont’s Riverfront Park through an agreement with the City and THC to allow better presentation of the artifact’s historical significance. The installation is the culmination of planning and work begun in 2007 by Bill Quick. No doubt he is smiling down on his handiwork!



Engraving of the USS Clifton



Photos of Restored “Walking Beam” from USS Clifton installed at Sabine Pass Battleground
Photo Credit: Mike McGreevy



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION NEWS

This month THC has available a new publication, Courthouse Cornerstones, which details the restoration work completed on more than 50 historic courthouses across the state. Since the Courthouse Preservation Program’s inception in 1999, the state has invested over \$247 million.

There remains some 75 historic courthouses in need of repair and restoration. This fact was recognized by the Historic Trust this past year when Texas Courthouses were listed, for the second time, on their list of the 11 most endangered historic places in the nation.



Jefferson County Courthouse Cornerstone
Photo Credit: Rebecca Bowden

PAST AND PRESENT: OUR HISTORIANS ARE A PRECIOUS RESOURCE BY PAUL PROSPERIE

No one can argue that Southeast Texas doesn't have a rich and diverse history although, if you would ask most people around here, they would probably tell you that everything started with Spindletop. Well, we know better. We know this because of a certain few individuals who took the time—sometimes their whole lives—to document and explore our past. It is these people whom I hold in the highest regard.

In my journey to discover Southeast Texas history, I have been fortunate to find many articles, books, and other sources of information that have aided my research. From our first historian, Florence Stratton, to W.T. Block, Bill Quick, Judith Walker Linsley, Ellen Walker Rienstra, Edward T. Cotham, Martha “Toodlum” Ferguson, Yvonne Sutherlin, and the many others whose works I have yet to explore.

These people have taken the time and done the legwork to valiantly give us a true picture of what has gone before. Indeed, our history is not just the battles in Sabine Pass or the discovery of oil south of Beaumont. And these people have weaved their way through our history to bring us the stories that I love to discover.

When I think of Sabine Pass, Kate Dorman is the first person who comes to mind. It is people like her who bring a real sense of history to our area. When I think of Richard W. Dowling, I see someone who accomplished many things in his short life away from the battlefield. The list of participants in our past goes on and on. Many had very interesting lives, which would have been forgotten were not for those few who keep our heritage alive. Beyond the glamour of historic recognition, most of these people lived their lives away from the history books, and we are fortunate to still be able to learn about them.

In doing research, some of my favorite portals to our history are of course the old books and articles from a time long since passed, such as *The Story of Beaumont* by Florence Stratton (1925), the *Beaumont American Guide* series (1930s), and of course, Susie Spindletop's *Weekly Letter* (1920s and 30s), all of which you can find at the Tyrrell Historical Library.

One thing that I find fascinating when reading these insights is the absence of the present's take on history. The past is still fresh, and you can tell this from the writings. Also, I will add that you can learn a lot about how people thought by reading a gossip column written 80-plus years ago.

Another source of information that I have been blessed to encounter is the Jefferson County Historical Commission's treasures from current members and those members who have passed on. It was there that I began to see the bigger picture of what we face: sadly we are losing our historians. When these people are gone, so goes the knowledge of our past. This is why it is so important to document it, write it, photograph it, in any way you can. It is our heritage, our past, and we owe future historians this courtesy.

I treasure those who have taken the time to investigate my area's past. Hopefully I can humbly add to their contributions in some way. They were, and are, my mentors, people who I wish I had known. If it weren't for them, our historical knowledge would be nonexistent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Eugenia Prosperie, wife of member Paul Prosperie, for spending an entire day sorting and cataloging books in the JCHC library. Her kind assistance with this organizational task is much appreciated!

HISTORY NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

- ◇ The Friends of the Texas Historical Commission (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation) has launched a new website: www.thcfriends.org The organization develops private resources to assist the Texas Historical Commission with its mission to identify, preserve, and protect our state's historic places.
- ◇ In celebration of the Lone Star State's beautiful and unrivaled collection of historic county courthouses the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in partnership with the Texas Historical Commission and Preservation Texas, will launch an interactive campaign celebrating these amazing structures and all that they mean to the people who love them. Social media will drive enthusiasts to a special website throughout the month of February.
- ◇ Galveston Historical Foundation marked the 150th anniversary of the Civil War Battle of Galveston on January 11-13, 2013. The Battle of Galveston, which took place during the early morning hours of January 1, 1863, is widely acknowledged as the most important military event in Galveston's history. Commemorative events taking place included battle re-enactments, lectures, living history encampments, a wet-plate collodion photography demonstration and a variety of special tours and programming focusing on Galveston's part in the 1863 battle.
- ◇ Texas Main Street Winter Training—Free Market Analysis for Main Street and Historic Downtowns seminar—Would you like to understand the changing marketplace and identify business development opportunities that are realistic and make sense for your historic downtown? Please join us for a free seminar in Llano, Texas on Wednesday, Jan. 30 from 1-5 p.m. at the LanTex Theater on the historic downtown square. Josh Bloom, principal of The Community Land Use and Economics (CLUE) Group of Arlington, VA and previous program officer at the National Trust Main Street Center, will be presenting on Market Analysis for Main Street and Historic Downtowns. More information can be found at www.thcfriends.org/texas-main-street-winter-training
- ◇ The McFaddin-Ward House Museum invites you to attend a book signing and discussion on Thursday, January 31, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. Book contributors and historians William Seale and JoAnn Stiles will present along with editor Milton Jordan on this fascinating compilation of recollections and stories about East Texas.
- ◇ The East Texas Historical Association will hold its 2013 Spring Meeting at the Moody Gardens Hotel and Resort in Galveston, Texas, from February 21-23, 2013. Registration is now open, and hotel reservations are available.

AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

Museum of the Gulf Coast

The Texas Pop Festival Revisited

The Port Arthur Historical Society is proud to announce the opening of a new temporary exhibition at the Museum of the Gulf Coast highlighting the Texas Pop Festival on loan from the Texas Musicians Museum in Dallas. The exhibition features images and objects related to musicians who performed at the 1960s festival including our own Janis Joplin and Johnny and Edgar Winter.

The exhibition will open in association with a larger project titled America's Music on Sunday, January 20 at 2:00 p.m. The free opening reception will feature a performance by one of southeast Texas' most popular party bands The Jazz Innovators followed by a guest presentation on Gulf Coast Music given by Dr. Sam Monroe. The exhibit ends March 24, 2013.



Museum of the Gulf Coast
Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



Chambers House
Photo Credit: chambershouse.org

Chambers House

The Beaumont Heritage Society welcomes visitors to the Chambers Historical House Museum. The House is open for tours Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Saturday tour hours are from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Admission fee is \$3.00 for adults, \$2.00 for senior citizens and \$1.00 for students. Groups of 10 or more, please call (409) 832-4010 for reservations.

McFaddin Ward House

You're invited to attend an evening of sweet traditions from the Victorian Era to today, at the McFaddin-Ward House! Celebrate the old-fashioned, with a new twist! Make the McFaddin-Ward House part of your First Thursday on Calder. Dress in party clothes or your favorite vintage-inspired outfit, come alone or with someone special, and enjoy period music and dance demos. Watch a silhouette artist at work, sample chocolate treats and champagne, learn the language of flowers, make a Valentine, and enjoy interpretations of Victorian etiquette while you tour the first floor of the museum on Thursday, February 7, 2013, from 6 - 8 p.m. Free!



McFaddin Ward House
Photo Credit: mcfaddin-ward.org

**JEFFERSON
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*To preserve and
promote history within
the County.*

We're on the web!
<http://co.jefferson.tx.us/>



317th District Courtroom
Light Fixture
Jefferson County Courthouse
Photo Credit: Rebecca Bowden

Jefferson County Historical Commission

Executive Board 2012 - 2013

Chairman, Theresa Goodness

Vice-Chairman, Les McMahan

Secretary/Treasurer, Paul Prosperie

Immediate Past Chairman, Ron Ellington

**“THIS AND THAT, HERE AND THERE- HISTORY
CAN BE FOUND ANYWHERE”**

JCHC MINI-MUSEUM

JANUARY 2013

Beginning Monday,
December 3, 2012, the
Jefferson County
Courthouse Mini-
Museum will house an
exhibit by County
employee Bradley Davis
entitled “This and That,
Here and There – History
Can Be Found
Anywhere.” The exhibit
is a sample of historical

memorabilia Bradley has
found through the years in
old houses, street trash
piles, garage sales and
family collections.